

COMMENTARY

THE JEWISH WRITER AND THE ENGLISH LITERARY TRADITION

A Symposium: Part I

IN AN article in the May number of COMMENTARY, Leslie A. Fiedler raised the question of the Jew's relation as writer and reader to a literary tradition which from Chaucer to T. S. Eliot is shot through with the notion of the Jew as a creature of darkness, deceit, and corruption. The fact that this problem is rarely brought into the open only attests, we believe, to its importance; one way or another, every Jew operating within the English literary tradition has had to face it. Most recently, it has confronted us in the controversy over the awarding of the Bollingen Prize for American poetry to Ezra Pound, and in T. S. Eliot's latest plea for an aristocratic and homogeneous Christian culture.

COMMENTARY has asked a number of Jewish writers to take up this problem in the form of a symposium, reporting briefly on how they deal with it both personally and in their work. About twenty writers have responded and their

responses will be published in two groups, the first group appearing below and the remainder to follow next month.

The question presented to these writers was as follows:

"As a Jew and a writer working within the Anglo-American literary tradition, how do you confront the presence in that tradition of the mythical or semi-mythical figure of The Jew, as found, for example, in the works of such writers as Chaucer, Marlowe, Shakespeare, Walter Scott, Trollope, T. S. Eliot, Evelyn Waugh, Thomas Wolfe, Henry Adams, etc.? Do you find this an important block or barrier to your full participation and integration, as a writer or a person, in the literary or cultural tradition involved? In what ways, if any, does this constitute a problem for you, and how do you deal with it, or think it should be dealt with? If you do not find it a problem or think it a problem, why not?"—ED.

William Phillips: I would like to commend Leslie Fiedler and the editors of COMMENTARY for bringing out into the open the difficult and touchy question of anti-Semitism in literature—a question that has been rumbling around behind the literary scene for several years and has been the painful subject of many nocturnal conversations and arguments. Ever since Hitler transformed anti-Semitism into a question of Jewish survival—that is, an inescapable question—I and many other writers I know who are Jews have been brooding about literary anti-Semitism. So far as I know, nobody has come up with a clear-cut theoretical solution to the problem, nor am I convinced it is possible to do so right now,

when so many other human issues are still dangling. What writers can do, however, is either to face such problems or to run away from them; and I am afraid part of the difficulty is that we have been doing both.

I recall years ago being aware, like everyone else, of anti-Semitism in Chaucer, Shakespeare, Dickens, D. H. Lawrence, etc. But the awareness was of something *also* observed, out of the corner of one's eye, something marginal, like the fact that writers were neurotic, or irresponsible, or that many of them were humanly despicable in so many ways. What was important was literature itself, the great tradition, or, rather, the cult of the tradition. Then, a few years later, everybody was a socialist, which meant we

were entranced by the vision of a new society coming in our time, in which all men would be brothers. Literary anti-Semitism would be swept away, along with poverty, disease, and stupidity—so why bother especially about anti-Semitism beyond the ritual condemnation of it as reactionary? But now that this bubble has been burst, we have finally come to realize that regardless of what the future will bring, it is the present we must live with. In short, until recently something other than anti-Semitism, whether it was literature or progress or a liberal tolerance of anti-Semitism, was always more important. At present, however, I think we are reaching the conclusion that nothing is more important than everything that happens to us, and we are suspicious of any system that overlooks these things. The fact is that as a Jew I am made uneasy by any kind of anti-Semitism, whether I find it in a bar, a summer resort, my friend's grandmother, or in the avant-garde cadences of Ezra Pound; and I think it a form of weaseling to ignore it or to accept it or to turn somersaults in order to justify it, as some people did in the Pound affair.

What makes things especially difficult is that a Jewish writer has a kind of dual being. He is both a Jew and a Western man. As a Jew, he bears the wounds of the stranger; as a Western man, he is part of the mind of Western civilization, sharing its values and contributing to its advances. And a conflict arises when he finds himself committed to a literary tradition laden with anti-Semitic notions. I have heard people argue that in this respect the Jew is no different from the Gentile, for both of them, as partners in the human tradition, should find anti-Semitism equally offensive. The trouble with this liberal platitude, however, is that the feelings of the victim cut deeper than the attitudes of enlightenment.

I think it would be more fruitful to examine some of the conventions and fetishes that perpetuate literary anti-Semitism. For one thing, we have been oppressed by what might be called a cult of literature, which, by assuming the sacredness of any "created" object, condones the most backward and vicious feelings. This cult has led to endless moral and aesthetic confusion. It tends to undermine the moral sense, since it assumes that moral values are to be derived from art rather than from the whole of human exist-

ence. And it has also had the effect of breaking down aesthetic discrimination, for the distinction between good and bad art, as in the case of the *Pisan Cantos*, has often been lost in the intoxication with *all* art.

Another fetish is that of the spoon-fed Anglo-American literary tradition so zealously nurtured in academic circles in this country, and palmed off as the literary tradition. No doubt the early work of T. S. Eliot effected a significant change in sensibility, but the present canonization of his entire being and the attempt to define our tradition as a thin line running back from Eliot through certain select English literary figures has led to literary and moral impoverishment. A literary tradition is made up of those achievements of the past that help sustain our creative needs today, and these creative needs go far beyond the very special visions of Eliot and those English poets who have been claimed as his ancestors, not to speak of those who have set themselves up as his heirs. The fact is, that the literary tradition celebrated in most literary journals in this country is primarily an English poetic tradition, and a restricted one besides, though certain elite talents like Henry James have also been admitted, and it has been given a reactionary twist by emphasizing its genteel, snobbish, anti-urban, and purely formal aspects.

So long as there is social anti-Semitism, so long as anti-Semitism lingers on in Western consciousness, I suppose it is bound to creep into literature, since art is not a sacred precinct, nor are all writers especially distinguished by the purity of their thinking and feeling. But I, for one, will continue to find anti-Semitism odious and a sign of some human and aesthetic failing. From a more positive point of view, however, it might be well for Jewish writers to remember that they have been placed in a position where their own interests to some extent coincide now with those of literature. For a truly cosmopolitan literary tradition that cuts under the shabby myths of anti-Semitism is more likely to go to the heart of all human conflict than some provincial movement filled with nostalgia for an aristocratic way of life that would make literature the property of Christian gentlemen. This is a tradition we can completely associate ourselves with, both as writers and as Jews.

Paul Goodman: How to confront anti-Semitic literary masterpieces? This problem seems to me factitious. For, first, each great literary treatment makes the myth come alive and be human. A crude stereotype may exist in low-grade imaginations, but Marlowe's Jew or Shylock are baroque portraits of men, whose individuality and circumstances and color and grand language are essential to their plausibility. A character who speaks heroic and spirited rhythms is not a beast. Creations whose power has proved itself for centuries have a deep humanity and a man may confidently steep himself in them and learn something for his advantage. I am surprised that literary persons should be moved by the stereotype remnants in the fable, deaf to the language; the vice of abstraction is usually restricted to ideologues and professionals. The glancing anti-Semitic caricatures of Eliot or Cummings, again, are sophomoric journalism unworthy of their talents; they could not energize an important work on such premises; such things are culturally trivial (socially often contemptible, in these cases pathetic).

And conversely, a great part of our notion of the truth of life comes from literature, including this literature. Literary masterpieces are a means of communication across the centuries and among ourselves; what other general means is there? By this means (publicly *only* by this means) passions and difficulties that exist submerged and in symptomatic stereotypes are brought to light and feeling. Frankly, to me, all this culture is important and "true"—that is, I do not know another standard I would confidently set against it. If our personal wisdom or even our sociology has hit on a new aspect of the truth, we must prove its human bearing by creating a new interpretation that comes alive and exists along with the old wisdom, such as it is. This is hard to do but it is not a "problem."

When Leslie Fiedler speaks of "building rival myths . . . K. . . . Swann . . . Bloom," I am at a loss. (But is K. a Jew?) How are these *rivals* of Shylock? Bloom seems to be the heir of the man who bleeds when you prick him. But what on earth is a rival work of art? A work is not an argument or a hypothesis but the achieved expression and proof of precisely the unity of mankind.

In brief, the literature is so because it is

human; and as artists we are, in a special sense, formed by and committed to the literature.

I am not surprised, then, to find that I myself in my writing have drawn heavily on this very "stereotype" of Barabas and Shylock. (A productive artist has the advantage of being able to examine objects of his subjectivity.) Let me give one instance in detail: the hero of my novel *The Grand Piano* is an old Jew usurer, no doubt with a knife, ready to sell his son for money. Because our society has so commercialized the goods of the Six Days he is trying to purge himself and the world by changing all value into money (perhaps the incorruptible will survive). Like Spinoza his teacher, he offers a mathematical certitude in morals, dollars, and cents, not the highest but fit for our degenerate days. But war he holds to be *goyim nachus*, the refuge of the impatient and stupid. Like Shylock and Barabas he succumbs to passionate inconsistent affection for his darlings. He follows Aristotle and Maimonides in insisting on the primacy of material nature, to be scanned by *pilpul*, and he pours scorn on ideas and ideals as idolatrous foolishness. He is plenty stiff-necked; this gives him a perspective from which he can tell Jewish jokes. He is an Oriental, longing for the palms of paradise, away from this cold Empire City. Like Swann a connoisseur, listening for the creator spirit, but he knows that art-works are mere filth, to be sold for money. He will sell his boy and you and me—with anguish in his fatherly heart. . . .

Why do I bore the reader with such stereotypes? Because, with the addition of diction and rhythm, they are the pattern in which I can communicate something significant to me. But one must not isolate this or that component. One must not take Barabas without his magnificence, and humor, and scholarship, and travels, and religion; and the whole, indeed, is Marlowe's picture not of a Jew but of the world. If then you don't like the picture because of certain components—tell me, how would you picture the world?

Shall we describe Father Abraham without the knife and Isaac? (By the way, it is well to emphasize the castration, but one should not understate the threat to the child's life.) We must also include the faith of Abraham and his familiarity with angels. Also the authoritative father who has in-

fluenced us for better and worse. Anti-Semites project this image, of course, but whither they project it, it belongs; their vulgar error is to be blind to Father Abraham in themselves. This is what Freud said.

Louis Kronenberger: Your "question," being actually a whole series of questions, calls forth rather a reaction than a reply. To begin with, was there, till very recently, anything resembling a powerful anti-Semitic strain in "the Anglo-American literary tradition"? Certainly the Jew recurs throughout our literature in many ugly (often symbolic) shapes: on the other hand he scarcely resides or looms large there. He is almost never a leading character. Though a stock synonym for usury or sharp practice, he is not, like the crafty foreigner (usually Italian) or the malevolent stranger (frequently gypsy), a stock villain. Till very late—because there were so few Jews in England—he was mainly legendary and exotic: even so, compared with all the horrors and hocus-pocus attributed to witches, necromancers, Oriental fakirs, etc., very little is attributed to Jews or Jewish ritualists. As a menacing symbol, again, the Jew has lagged far behind the Jesuit or the Jacobin or the Machiavellian. And where he has been blackened merely for *being* a Jew, he is far more of a personification than a person. In modern times, as a symbol of the corruptness of a banking civilization, the Jew has been portrayed with more realism—and with more resentment. But, all in all, the Gentile's resentment of the rich Jew is of a piece with the Englishman's of the rich American or the Southerner's of the rich Yankee—one of social (and sometimes moral) contempt mixed with economic envy.

Hence in any reasonably healthy society, the long-established figure of a Barabas or Fagin can hardly be considered distressing. It is, on the whole, exceptional; it is, to the point of crudity, extravagant. It is not till anti-Semitism grows virulent that the Jew-as-menace in literature menaces the Jew in real life. At that point there is a very grave problem; but the problem is not Barabas or Fagin but Father Coughlin or Hitler. Barabas and Fagin are fuel for a fire that literature itself (in strong contrast to journalistic propaganda) never starts. Indeed, observed *inside* literary tradition, Barabas and Fagin involve

not how anti-Semitic but only how anti-realistic a Marlowe and a Dickens are. Shylock, unfortunately, has leaped—as a *name*—out of literature into folklore, to become a quick inflammatory device for propagandists: everything considered, there is perhaps less danger in a Gentile's reading *The Merchant of Venice*—in tranquil circumstances, of course—than in his not reading it.

For the extra-literary harm they can do, I naturally deprecate all these things; but I find them no barrier to "full participation and integration," etc., etc. Mr. Fiedler's article is a very good literary-historical study, but, it seems to me, rather revives the Jewish problem on an intellectualized Protocols-of-Zion basis. The real problem, surely, is more immediate and realistic, involving not the Beast but the Banker (Byron's "Their cash comes *from*, their wealth goes *to*, a Jew"). The real problem is not the exuberant creator of implausible Jews, like Marlowe, but the calculating disparager of a vulnerable Jewry, like Belloc. At the moment I am very conscious, also, of a growing American-Jewish popular literature of hack writers and glib humorists whose meretriciousness merits utter contempt. Along with the danger of how viciously the Jew is written about, is there not also the danger of how reprehensibly he writes?

David Daiches: The problem we are asked to discuss is at least as old as Philo Judaeus. It is a subtler problem for us than it was for Philo, for while Alexandrian Greek culture owed nothing to the Hebrew tradition, modern Western culture owes a great deal. The same modern poet who wrote

*Rachel née Rabinovitch
Tears at the grapes with murderous paws*

has also written

*In Shushan the palace, in the month of
Nisan,
He served the wine to the king Artaxerxes,
And he grieved for the broken city, Jerusalem.*

From the Jewish point of view, Christianity is a Jewish heresy. So long as Christian writers worked in a culture which felt

that the Jews, representing the surviving parent body, constituted a standing challenge to the newer religion's claim to be an orthodoxy, their anti-Semitism could not seriously disturb cultivated Jewish readers. Both Chaucer's singing boy and Shakespeare's Shylock represent traditional material supplied by Christian culture. It is only by accepting obstacles—opposed by tradition—to a realistic appraisal of Shylock's character and fortunes that we can see him (as Shakespeare meant him to be seen) as a comic character at all.

Since the breakdown of Christendom as *the* Western culture, the problem has been different. Christendom and Jewry have in fact more in common than they have apart (though what they do not share is of immense importance), but each represents a comprehensive way of life, and so long as those two ways of life were opposed to each other as majority and minority cultures, each committed to a total belief in its own truth and value, anyone from either group who sought intellectual nourishment from the other's literature would have to be prepared for some shocks.

In the modern world, however, we have been moving towards a pluralistic culture, with any given religion regarded as one group's way of looking at things which may have something valuable to suggest to civilization as a whole even if it is not historically true or wholly viable. In a civilization both pluralistic and humanistic we are (theoretically, at least) prepared to attack individual views but not to create abusive symbols out of Jews or Christians. Those who do so are betraying the pluralistic, humanist culture towards which Western civilization has been moving since the Renaissance. I personally believe that such a culture is the most truly civilized which man has yet envisaged, although I know that we are still far from achieving it. (We seem to be achieving pluralism without humanism, the more important ingredient.)

Anti-Semitism among serious writers today is therefore a symptom of the repudiation of this kind of culture. The Jew who is confronted with anti-Semitism in these writers can comfort himself with the realization that basically he is being attacked not as Jew but as representative and champion of the kind of pluralistic, humanist culture that the Western world has been trying to create

since the decline of medieval Christendom. He represents, in fact, a more inclusive and richer Western culture than his opponents, and in so doing he has many friends; so that he need not feel that the attacks should drive him out of Western culture back into the ghetto. Let us understand our relation to Western culture and see our enemies not as those who can dampen our enthusiasm for English or American literature, but as cultural "reactionaries" who would like to see us again as unbelievers in a closed society. We can resent this attitude without feeling our status as Jewish members of Western civilization in the least threatened—in fact, it is in many ways strengthened.

Isaac Rosenfeld: I don't think the question is of much importance, speaking comparatively. The anti-Semitism of my neighbors, of shopkeepers and subway crowds, of men as men, and, above all, the anti-Semitism of governments, are of much greater moment to me. I expect to be able to get along as a writer, even if an anti-Semitic tradition in English and American literature does block my full participation and integration in the tradition—whatever that may mean. So they won't name streets after me. Thus far, I have suffered as a writer much more from the fact that there is a very small market for my kind of writing, that I have to spend valuable time doing other things, such as teaching school, to earn a living, and that, for neurotic reasons, I undergo sterile periods, which can happen to any man, than I have suffered from the fact that I am a Jew.

I deal with the problem in two ways, whether it comes up in my school work or in any public discussion, or whether I encounter it in my own reading, my own reflections. I tell my students (and myself) that there are certain historical conditions to be kept in mind and that, as literature is bound to reflect its time, there are such and such reasons for the presence of anti-Semitism in the work of Chaucer, Shakespeare, Marlowe, or any other writer. But such explanations have never satisfied me because they tend to obscure the pathological aspect of anti-Semitism. I therefore go on to discuss the pathology of anti-Semitism, even though I am better qualified to speak of historical and cultural matters. I regard anti-

Semitism as a symptom of a serious, underlying psycho-sexual disease of epidemic proportion in our society; it is a symptom of a serious disease, just as coughing up blood, rapid loss of weight, persistent pain, fever, and swelling are symptoms of serious disease. Sooner or later, the original question, the anti-Semitism of this or that writer, drops out of sight—which is the way, I believe, the discussion should be conducted.

To stick to the subject like a good literary critic, or to admit only historical and social data, is to create a false impression: that the pathological side of anti-Semitism deserves attention only in special cases—e.g., Ezra Pound—when a man can be declared clinically insane. The contrary is true. It is only in the exceptional case, if then, that one can do away with clinical considerations. The biggest mistake we can make in dealing with anti-Semitism is not to recognize the sickness; we dignify it whenever we call it something else. I think it would be a good idea, incidentally, for the various interfaith groups and Jewish organizations that deal with the problem to waste fewer words on brotherhood and let the public know a few clinical facts. Americans hate to be sick.

I am aware that I hold a reductive position, that I would reduce a complex cultural problem to a clinical one, and that this is not the way to conduct literary discussions. Literature teaches us profound respect for phenomena, it holds us among the many details of the surface and keeps us from plunging at once after causes. Admirable as the literary attitude is on other occasions, this is one time when it can be harmful, and must be abandoned. The surface of anti-Semitism has no attraction, and for me, at any rate, respect for this phenomenon died in a concentration camp. Anti-Semitism is not a literary problem. It is a disease.

Stanley Edgar Hyman: It seems to me that the attitudes and responsibility of the Jewish writer toward the caricatured figure of the Jew in literature do not differ very markedly from the attitudes and responsibility of any writer to any such generalized caricature—we can expect him not to like it, and we can expect him to oppose it with the truth to whatever degree he can. There is this curious parochialism about Fiedler's otherwise useful article

and the symposium question as framed, as though only Negro literary men might be assumed to feel hurt and concerned over the caricatures of the Negro in our literature (a far more prevalent and violent problem in American writing, incidentally, although one would never guess it from Fiedler's article, than the travesty on the Jew, and one "men have died of" with equal finality).

The writer's responsibility, in short, lies in knowing and telling the truth: not the simplistic "truth," actually a counter-caricature, of opposing Riah to Fagin or Shylock the persecuted to Shylock the persecutor, but the truth in all its complexity and ambiguity. In the case of the ballad about Hugh of Lincoln, "The Jew's Daughter," this would involve not only Fiedler's sharp psychoanalytic reading, but an exploration of the *reality* of the myth (why does Fiedler, like so many others, use "myth" to mean a damned lie?) in ancient ritual sacrifice, seeing the forgotten ritual figure of the sacrificial priest become identified as "Jew" by a process of folk rationalization (precisely as the "dark men" of the summer-winter combats become rationalized as "gypsies" in another ballad, "The Gypsy Laddie"), then seeing this "neutral" rationalization moved in on, consciously or not, for religious, social, and economic ends. Where the writer, teacher, or critic can comprehend and present the lie of Little Sir Hugh in this context of *process*, he need not censor Chaucer or Wordsworth, nor even encourage the sort of well-meaning bowdlerization represented by Benjamin Britten's recent arrangement of the ballad, with "Jew's wife" altered to "school wife" throughout. Or we can note critically, as Fiedler does not, that Eliot tends to pull an ironic switch on his caricature of the Jew (so that the point of "Burbank with a Baedeker" is not that the Jew sullies Venice by trade, but that only the Jew represents the power and passion of trade that was the strength of Venice in its prime), but we are still obligated to add that Eliot is anti-Semitic. (Here my own experience may be instructive: I noted Eliot's genteel anti-Semitism in *The Armed Vision*, in context and with a body of evidence, and was reproached by a reviewer in the *New York Times Book Review*, himself Jewish, with having "an area of abnormal prejudice" and with being "out on a witch hunt," as though not the attitude but re-

marking on it were the sign of bias and the offense against taste.)

Insofar as the Jewish writer may have a special stake in the problem, or at least a special sensitivity, he has it only to the degree to which he is Jewish ("Jewish" means such a variety of things, from a total orthodoxy to a concealed descent). Speaking for myself, with a Jewish culture and religious training substantially repudiated, but with a "heritage" identification, particularly in these days of Israel, somewhat belligerently affirmed, I would say that the degree of exacerbation, of being to some extent "alien" or "outsider" to European culture, is probably as artistically and critically valuable as it is hurtful (here I have to face the fact that some comparable aesthetic sensibility seems to recompense a surprising number of epileptics, catamites, and writers in the American South). Thus, although tradition properly has it "hard to be a Jew," it must be hard for many writers not to be Jews.

Let the Jewish writer, then, if he is to censor anything, censor his own covert forms of anti-Semitism, among them self-pity and parochialism, which is his special occupational disease (and one not unknown to COMMENTARY's pages). Beyond that, he can hardly be responsible for the history of literature, except insofar as his own work is part of it. In other words, let him "contextualize" the Jewish villain for students, oppose it with truth for the rest of the reading public, and keep the fluff from accumulating in his own pockets.

Diana Trilling: The fact that the Anglo - American literary tradition includes many unjust representations of the Jew does not in itself trouble me very deeply. Of course I am momentarily angered and frightened each time I meet a hostile statement about Jews—that is inevitable. But I feel no more significantly excluded from the stream of literature because it contains anti-Semitic statements than I do because it contains other ideas which I consider false or dangerous. I see no reason to give more weight to, say, Dickens's anti-Semitism than to his anti-parliamentarianism: the latter is just as much a threat to my security as the former. But it is never suggested that Dickens should perhaps be boycotted because of his animus against the

democratic process. The Jewish issue is the only one to which we bring this sensitivity.

Mr. Fiedler would no doubt answer me as he answers John Haynes Holmes, that our readiness to take special offense at the attack upon Jews stems from our realization that Jews have died because of the anti-Jewish myth. But so have parliamentarians—to follow out this instance—died because of the anti-democratic myth, and so have Jews died because they were parliamentarians. The process of cause and effect in history is not so direct as we sometimes like to make out. There is unquestionably a clear path from Shylock or Fagin to Dachau, but is there not also a discernible path between Marx's formulation of a socialist absolutism and the concentration camp of National Socialism? The course of politics cannot be mapped by a series of fixed points of belief, and it is a dangerous over-simplification to act as if it can. Today's unmistakable good—for example, a strong trade-union sentiment—may as surely be tomorrow's evil as the phenomena, like racial prejudice, which we immediately recognize to be evil.

Obviously, I am not asking for an abrogation of all judgment while we await the verdict of time. But certainly our literary judgments must be made in their proper historical context. There is an important distinction between the anti-Semitism of the past, when the general population was not nearly so conscious of the political uses to which racial hostility could be put, and the anti-Semitism of today: a Dickens is to be forgiven as an Ezra Pound is not.

But I also make a sharp distinction between the anti-Semitic formulations of two contemporaries like T. S. Eliot and Pound. Taken in relation to the body of Eliot's work, his attitude toward the Jew must, I believe, be understood as a figure of speech; the Jew is a metaphor for alienation, for the spirit which stands outside Eliot's particular design for a good society. Pound's, on the other hand, has a whole context of social irresponsibility. Even the Jew himself, if he comes to Eliot's ideas objectively, can learn a great deal from Eliot's statement of his case, whereas from Pound both Jew and Gentile can only learn hatred.

I think Mr. Fiedler touches the heart of this matter of the Jew and the literary tradition when, in his final remarks, he speaks

of the Jew as now "the essential myth of the whole Western world." Under our very eyes we see the Wandering Jew become wandering man, the alien Jew generalizing into the alienated human being. We would do well to transfer some of our anxiety about the anti-Jewish myth to all the anti-human myths which contemporary culture is so self-destructively intent upon creating. Kafka's "K." or Eliot's Prufrock, our whole modern kinship with these bloodless brothers of whatever creed, worry me rather more than Hugh of Lincoln.

Howard Nemerov:

I am asked to speak here as "a Jew and a writer," and this seems to me a clear invitation to announce the kind of schizophrenia by which I find it possible to live and work. What one hopes of works of the imagination, these days anyhow, is that they shall confuse, cancel, and generally defeat even the cleverest rhetorical propositions about "the human condition"—I believe that the art I most admire demands irony, evasion, conflict, and doubt as its bases—and even if one wished to go back to the "applications" of the *Gesta Romanorum*, this wish would have the intention of mockery and evasion. On the other hand, the fact that I write this piece admits a validity in the question, as well as a desire on my part for clarity.

My intellectual relation to Judaism has been slight compared with my relation to the Christian tradition of Western literature. For some years, until my *Bar Mitzvah*, I was laboriously instructed in the fluent reading of Hebrew, without however being given any instruction in the translation of that language into English: this early and exact avowal of the letter and denial of the spirit has since seemed significant of a more general dispossession. But as the question is by no means altogether of an intellectual relation, it follows that I am in the unhappy though by no means unique position of willingly suffering embarrassment and some pain from what I love, Western literature; and perhaps also in the position of the Laodiceans (Rev. 3:14-16), though out of whose mouth I shall be spat (the Amen, the faithful and true witness? the late Senator Bilbo?) has never been made clear.

The universalizing tendency of society at present (toward "one world" wherein the

Many is to do duty for the absent One) seems to wish to make life hard for the Laodicean (who would prefer indeed to be called simply an ironical man) by enforcing vociferous and unequivocal choice everywhere in the realm of value: the presentation of such occasions has created a number of intellectual uniforms which, while a little tight at collar or crotch, may so to speak be suffered on parade, and I do not think it possible in making a public statement to avoid wearing a close facsimile of one or other of these uniforms, even in all honesty. With so much, too much, preamble, a statement follows.

1. Humanly, and in particular as a Jew, I detest and fear anti-Semitism, but do not find it especially formidable (or in any way an occasion of public action) in the writings of the authors listed in the question.

2. I recognize danger in the presentation of anti-Semitic opinion to large and not necessarily adult audiences grouped together, and that any question, regarding future works, of whether (and in whose mind) the art outweighs the hatred may be impossible to solve; but so far as concerns the writers mentioned I cannot feel my occasional twinges to be a sufficient motive of censorship or even censure.

3. Should I elect to deal specifically and overtly, in a work of fiction, with "the problem" of "the Jew," I would anticipate a multiplication of ordinary compositional difficulties by a considerable factor of personal pain and anxiety; whether this would be beneficial to the work or not, only the work could show.

Stephen Spender:

In answering your question, I should first explain that I am not a Jew. I have a Jewish maternal grandfather, a German maternal grandmother. I am a quarter Jewish and a quarter German only by blood, that is to say, as my father's side of my family has been British for over a hundred years.

Nevertheless, even with this amount of Jewishness, I feel Jewish, and your question seems relevant to my own preoccupations in thinking of myself as a writer. Ever since I have known about my own Jewish blood (scarcely ever mentioned in my family) and of the Jew as a mythical figure in English literature and English conversation, I have

thought of my self as un-English, different. I certainly am different. I attribute this largely to my being Jewish.

I have become aware of my own Jewishness, almost as though I were a Jew, or as though there were about the Jewish when it is mixed with the English an irreconcilability of strains, perhaps because the English strain is itself so pure: perhaps too (to complicate the matter still further) because the Jews secretly admire the English purity, the English sense of belonging to a favored race. The English country gentleman corresponds to a Jewish aristocratic ideal. The English Jews (the Rothschilds, the Sassoons, the Schusters, the Mondes, etc.) have tried harder to become English gentlemen, even when remaining Jews, than Jews elsewhere have tried to adapt themselves to any ideal of national personality in other countries. I would add to your gallery of mythical Jewish figures Siegfried Sassoon's self-portrait in *Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man*, although I do not think Sassoon ever says much about his being Jewish.

I am convinced that the Jew, or the person of Jewish extraction, is different from other people the moment that he is conscious of his Jewishness. Anthropologically this sense of difference may be unjustified, but psychologically it exists. All discussions by Jews beginning with the argument "We are the same as everybody else" seem to me based on a false premise: for the moment the Jew has said "we," in his heart he means that he is different from every non-Jew.

Therefore these projections into literature of mythical Jewish characters are primarily to be considered as interpretations by Gentiles of the fact that the Shylocks, the Fagins, etc., feel themselves to be different. Shylock wants to be treated as a human being with the equal rights of other human beings, but he does not want his daughter to marry a Gentile. This is really what constitutes his Jewishness far more than his wanting his pound of flesh, which is just silly.

The real "block or barrier," as you put it, which prevents the Jewish person from "full participation and integration as a writer or a person, in the literary or cultural tradition involved," is this sense of being different. Most of the arguments used against Jews and labeled "anti-Semitism" are unserious, however painful may be their consequences. To

accuse the Jews of usury and corruption as does Ezra Pound is like accusing the French of all the crimes of capitalism simply because there are French capitalists. Pound is really a Communist *manqué* who failed to find his real enemy, which is international capitalism, and who mistook Mussolini for Stalin. Like many other anti-Semites he fastened onto the Jews the crimes of the whole modern development of humanity. This proves nothing about the Jews, it simply reveals a streak of baseness in a fine poet, just as Eliot's "Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar" reveals a baseness which grieves one for a poet of the finest integrity. The ignoble qualities of Boston should not constitute a mental barrier for the Jews. On the contrary anti-Semitism has ennobled, purified, and made heroic the Jews in our epoch. That some of the writers we most admire should have lent themselves to anti-Semitism only shows that a corruption and squalor which is far from being confined to the Jews disgraces our intellectual life. But although this may be presented as a Jewish-Gentile problem, it really is not one at all. It is part of a far wider problem of moral disintegration.

My point is that the mythical figure of the Jew in literature is an attempt to describe a serious situation which does constitute a problem: namely, the existence of a Jewish self-consciousness; but that mere anti-Semitism does not describe this situation at all and should create no barrier for us. One should thank God for the Jewish blood which saves one from opinions such as those expressed in Eliot's anti-Semitic early poetry and spares one from conversion to the Catholicism based on hatred of an Evelyn Waugh. But to decide that most anti-Semitism has no relevance to a real Gentile-Jew situation does not remove the real problem, which is Jewish self-consciousness.

How to deal with this problem, you ask? As with most problems, I think: by understanding it in its own nature and then trying to relate it to other things. For example, a result of the Jewish sense of not being integrated into the culture in which one is placed, is a tendency to generalize, to be abstract, to theorize on very broad lines about the society in which one lives, but which one feels outside. For a writer to understand this tendency in himself is to enable him to deal with it *through his art*. Generalization,

abstraction, excessive theorizing makes bad language: as a writer one must be close to what one describes, one must be sensuous, concrete, personal.

In fact, I think that a creative artist is a person cursed with an excessive sensibility to problems and difficulties, and blessed with a miraculous gift of transforming them into objects. The only condition attendant on his gift is that he must really transform his experiences, he must make them hard, fully experienced, articulated lumps of objective life. He must offer experiences themselves, poised in inter-related sensuous words, not just ideas about experiences or emotions about them. If he does this he certainly finds his way back into the tradition, which is not a mausoleum but a community of life. He enters into the life around him by being alive, and into the tradition at that point where tradition is a perpetually changing and developing consciousness of life into which new living forms are forever entering, but where corpses and ideologies and racial grievances are not admitted.

Harold Rosenberg: "The Jew" in literature is a mask. He is created for play, like other personifications. Before such figures—so simple and definite, so plainly what things are said to be, rather than what they are—the mind lets go and the spectator enjoys easy loves and hates. Heartless, money-loving, vengeful Jew; crafty, treacherous, poison-dealing Florentine; bland, witty Chinese—having closed the investigation regarding actual persons, the cliché raises the curtain and starts the music.

From the Elizabethan cliché of Jewish unfeeling and cupidity, Shakespeare created the dramatic image of Shylock *in order to give pleasure*. The pleasure communicates itself to me when I see or read *The Merchant*. The villainies of Shylock have never interfered with it. Shylock is not my brother, but brother to those other Shakespearean pigstickers, Iago, Claudius, Macbeth. One is labeled Jew, the others Italian, Dane, Scot. But all are made of the same material, like those dolls in native costume one sees in shop windows. They are made of the pleasurable *papier mâché* of poetry, not of the human clay of contempt and violence. So Jews enjoy Shylock, Italians the "Machiavellian" Iago, and no doubt the "deaf and

dumb Danes," as Joyce called them, appreciate Hamlet and his uncle.

Shylock is not a nightmare figure with a knife—Fiedler is utterly mistaken. Shylock is an actor, and his knife is rubber. To his famous question, "Hath not a Jew eyes," etc., the theater gives a double response. One: the Jew is a man like others, he has eyes, and if you prick him he bleeds. Two: this altogether offensive Jew is not a man but an actor, his eyes are painted, his hooked nose is made of putty, and if you prick him the pin folds up. *While watching the play*, everybody experiences this double and contradictory recognition. If, instead, a fear of being murdered by "the Jew" were evoked, it would be time to ring for the ambulance.

Moving from the cliché to the theatrical personification, art does no harm. What does the harm is the movement in the opposite direction, from the personification to the cliché. This second movement is made by the propagandist and the sociological critic. With these, the personifications made by artists for pleasure become descriptions of "reality."

An illustration is Fiedler himself, though of course he means no harm. He starts with Shylock and ends with "the Jew with the Knife" as an "archetype inhabiting the collective unconscious of the English-speaking people." He begins with art and ends with a cliché (of psychoanalysis) conceived as a reality. I see less danger in a thousand performances of *The Merchant of Venice*.

A more complete illustration is Fiedler's 19th-century German critic who "returns from a performance full of anti-Semitic fire to jot down the terrible words of Luther, which he felt confirmed by Shylock." This is supposed to prove how dangerous *The Merchant* is. Now, first, the German is a critic; secondly, he has "returned" from the performance; thirdly, the personification "confirmed" a passion he already had. A layman, *in the theater*, would have experienced the double response of art and would not have regarded this particular semi-comic "Jew" as evidence condemning an entire people.

But our fellow is a professional opinion-shaper of the kind that uses art to support programs of action, and who translates art into reality. So *The Merchant* confirms his belief that the Jew is the devil. Hearing

"Kill him, he's a poet," in *Julius Caesar*, this same critic might insist that the good of the state demands the extermination of artists, as demonstrated by such great minds as Plato and Shakespeare.

I "confront the presence of the Jew" in literature as a series of particular instances, each with its own artistic quality and intellectual seriousness. Why should I resent Eliot's poem for its Jewish landlord repulsive to the aristocrat who lost his property? Alas, says Eliot, in the modern world there is no entailed real estate, no integrated culture, no "roots," no high ritual, nothing but capitalism, Jews, and progress, tsk, tsk. I take this music as I do that of a Hungarian orchestra in a restaurant with atmosphere (the very restaurant of "Rachel née Rabinovich"). So aristocratic, dancers in genuine ermine, what if the waiter is a White Guardist and an expogromchick? Another chilled vodka, please!

It is quite a different thing when Eliot puts down his harmonica, mistakes himself for the dispossessed Prince Romanoff, and

proposes communities with NO JEWS signs on them. Here we face the fact that there is no cultural tradition that does not contain an enormous amount of stupidity, to say nothing of dope-taking, sexual infirmity, and actual madness. Is this "an important block to full participation and integration"? It depends on what you mean. To the academician participation means being on the side of all who contribute to literature. A sailor, however, who picks up a beer bottle and starts swinging it in a free-for-all is also participating and integrating. The presence in "the Anglo-American tradition" of the customary quota of fools and angry men bars no one from full involvement in it in the latter sense.

In sum, "the Jew" is not a literary problem. It is a social problem relating to the use of literature as a weapon. The question is not one of excluding any image from literature, but of fighting anti-Semitism—including that of literary men who offer this miserableness as a sociology to their fellow citizens.

WILLIAM PHILLIPS is an editor of *Partisan Review*. He has edited, among other books, *The Short Stories of Dostoevsky*. PAUL GOODMAN is a poet, novelist, and critic whose latest book is *Kafka's Prayer*. LOUIS KRONENBERGER is the dramatic critic for *Time* magazine and has written and edited a number of books, one of the best-known of which is *Kings and Desperate Men*. DAVID DAICHES is a professor of English and chairman of the division of literature at Cornell University. His most recent book of criticism is *A Study of Literature for Readers and Critics*. ISAAC ROSENFELD, now working on a second novel, is the author of *Passage from Home*. STANLEY EDGAR HYMAN is on the staff of the *New Yorker* and the author of a volume of literary criticism, *The Armed Vision*. DIANA TRILLING, who writes for the *New York Times Book Review*, the *Nation*, and other magazines, has edited *The Portable D. H. Lawrence*. HOWARD NEMEROV is a poet and novelist, the author of *The Melodramatists*. He is at present teaching English at Bennington College. STEPHEN SPENDER is a poet and essayist. He is on the English faculty of Sarah Lawrence College. An autobiographical work of his will be published shortly. HAROLD ROSENBERG has written a volume of poems, *Trance above the Streets*, and contributed articles to a number of periodicals.

Part II of this symposium will be published in the October issue of *COMMENTARY*. Among the contributors will be Saul Bellow, Martin Greenberg, James Grossman, Irving Howe, Alfred Kazin, Harry Levin, William Poster, Philip Rahv, and Karl Shapiro.

A PLEA FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN ISRAEL

The American Experience Can Serve as a Guide

MILTON R. KONVITZ

THERE are many who, in a flush of enthusiasm, and perhaps under the influence of the doctrine of the Chosen People, insist that in future years the State of Israel is destined to be the teacher and the rest of mankind its pupils; that Israel, the stone that had been rejected, will become the cornerstone of the world's structure of civilization and culture.

Most American Jews probably have more modest expectations. They believe that Israel will occupy a respectable place among the nations of the world; that it will contribute its share to international welfare and culture; that if it becomes a light unto other nations, it is unlikely that it will be in any significant way a greater light than, for example, France, England, or the United States.

But all of this means looking into the womb of time. What will happen, will happen only after great struggles, much suffering, with losses here and gains there. One thing seems certain: the future of Israel

will be determined in large part by strangers outside the land—by the Russians, the British, the Arabs, the Americans, the Chinese, and the other peoples of the world. The citizens of Israel will not be permitted to become isolationists. Their smallness or greatness of mind and soul will be beaten out on the anvil of history, and it will be the vocation of other peoples to wield the hammer.

Israel is now subject to the forces of history precisely in the same way as Holland or Eire, Egypt or Burma—or Russia or the United States, for that matter. One may consider the question whether this fact is good or bad from the standpoint of the future of the Jews of Israel or of the world; but raising the question will in no way alter the fact that Israel exists. When I hear it said that the American Council for Judaism now “accepts” the State of Israel, I recall what Carlyle said of Margaret Fuller when he heard that she had decided to “accept” the universe: “Gad! She’d better!”

THE Jews in the Galut, the world of “Exile” outside Palestine, need a spiritual center in Palestine, said Ahad Ha’am. But one should add that the Jews in Palestine need the spiritual values that the Galut has created or accepted. The Galut is two thousand years older than the State of Israel. What Israel will contribute to the Galut remains to be seen (I write this with hope, for we must desire great things for and from Israel). At the present time, however, I should like to submit the thought that Israel can learn something from us in the Galut, more particularly from American Jews. I should like to state baldly that we American Jews enjoy some ideals and some institutions which it would repay the citizens of Israel to study and even to duplicate.

IN THE August issue of COMMENTARY, Hal Lehrman reported from Tel Aviv on the controversy taking place in Israel over the difficult question of religion and the state. Here, MILTON KONVITZ presents the case for what might be called the American libertarian point of view. Dr. Konvitz, himself an observing Jew, has been actively concerned with problems of civil rights and the relations of church and state in the United States. He is professor of industrial and labor relations at Cornell University, editor of *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, a member of the editorial board of the *Reconstructionist*, and author of *The Constitution and Civil Rights* and other books. Much of the material in this article was embodied in a speech Dr. Konvitz delivered at the annual meeting of the American Council for Judaism in April of this year. Other viewpoints on this important subject will be presented in subsequent issues.

The chief values that Israel can learn from us as Jews and Americans are those of religious liberty and cultural pluralism.

Orthodox Judaism is, in its basic theory, not libertarian. Its ideal is a theocratic government, a state in which the laws of Moses and of the *Shulchan Aruch*, as well as the legal dicta found in the responsa and halachic writings of the great rabbis, would determine the ways of men in business, domestic, and all other affairs of life. It does not contemplate the free, legislative creation of law by a body of representatives chosen by the people. Government under Orthodox Jewish law negates any notion of religious liberty for the Jewish citizen, for there can be no freedom for Jews from Jewish law. Desecration of the Jewish Sabbath would call for punishment by civil authority; an organ in the synagogue would be prohibited; radical unauthorized changes in the order of public prayers or religious services would be criminal offenses.

In the United States, Orthodox Jews, rabbis and laymen (except a handful of extremists, not unlike fundamentalists found in other religious communities), have made radical departures in practice. Orthodox rabbis are on speaking terms, and sometimes even on friendly terms, with Reform and Conservative rabbis. An Orthodox Jew sits at the same table with a Reform or agnostic Jew, and he will limit his diet to the fruit-cup while his friend will eat a non-kosher steak, but neither will criticize the other or harbor any grievance. "America is a *freie medina*," we used to say, and we follow the policy of "live and let live." Even the Orthodox have learned to follow Jefferson's example in avoiding debates on religious beliefs and practices, and they believe with him that whether a man believes in one god or in twenty gods, it "neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg," and hence is nobody's business.

American Jews have accepted the fundamental tenets of religious freedom wholeheartedly. A few years ago, there were Jews who followed some Protestants and the Catholics in sponsoring "released time" in public

schools; today almost all American Jews seek ways to avoid getting involved in even this relatively mild form of state aid to religion. Our rabbinical and lay organizations have filed briefs with our highest state and federal courts in support of the principle of separation of church and state—their absolute separation. In our private and in our public lives we follow the constitutional principle of separation of church and state, and of complete religious freedom.

In our religious institutions we follow the congregational pattern—each synagogue or temple has complete and ultimate authority over choice of rabbi, choice of prayer book, order and conduct of service; and the variations, as we know, are multitudinous. Men are selected as rabbis and other religious functionaries who have never studied for the calling they fill, yet no one attempts to assert authority over them by ordering them to "cease and desist." We have no hierarchy, and our rabbis have no more authority than we are willing to delegate to them.

Now and then someone will express displeasure with our libertarian society. They want "order" and more "order"—as if freedom of individual judgment and decision is not itself an "order." Henry Hurwitz, editor of the *Menorah Journal*, has recently called upon American Jews to return to the synagogue and to make of the synagogue the central institution in the Jewish community. "This way lies the true Jewish future in America," he says, "that all of us throughout the country who regard religion, broadly conceived in the comprehensive classic Jewish sense, as the sole justification of *organized* Jewish life in America should now withdraw from the secular bodies and concentrate on a religious reorientation and reorganization of all legitimate Jewish interests. This can be done only on the basis of the Synagogue." He demands the "reaffirmation of the Synagogue as the seat, center, and incentive of Jewish life in America. . . ."

Despite the record of Mr. Hurwitz's significant contributions to Jewish life and culture, his plea will be considered most uncon-

genial to the spirit of American democracy, as we Jews have come to interpret that spirit. His plan implies that the synagogue will be the institution called upon to play the same role in the lives of American Jews that the church plays in the lives of American Catholics. It calls for the "Synagogue" with a capital "S," so that we may speak of the Jewish Synagogue as we speak of the Catholic Church. This would be a move in the direction of cutting down the liberty of Jews to have "synagogues," written in lower case, big synagogues and little synagogues, *shtiebels*, temples, centers. It is easy for Catholics to concentrate their special interests around the Church, for there is only one Church for them. But for Jews there is no one Synagogue. Catholics know only one Christianity, that of the Roman Catholic Church; all other forms are schisms and heresies. Jews know many forms of Judaism.

THERE are many Jews whose devotion and contributions to Jewish life are beyond question but who claim no synagogal affiliation. Morris R. Cohen, founder of the Conference on Jewish Relations and of the magazine *Jewish Social Studies*, was such a Jew. Horace M. Kallen, vice-president of the American Association for Jewish Education, is such a Jew. Albert Einstein is such a Jew. Are we to force upon them membership in a Synagogue?

Similar objections may be made to the plans for a new American Jewish community projected by the respected educator and theologian Mordecai M. Kaplan. Membership in the Jewish community is to be voluntary under his scheme, but a non-member will be denied "permission to worship in any of the community's synagogues, religious education for his children, religious services in celebration of *Berith Milah*, *Bar Mitzvah*, marriage, burial in a Jewish cemetery and with Jewish religious rites." The community is to lay down the qualifications of rabbis and define their authority, duties, and rights with respect to tenure and promotions. "We Jews," says Dr. Kaplan, "should strive to achieve a community status which is analo-

gous to that of the Catholic Church. . . . American Jews should interpret their solidarity as a religio-cultural one, entirely parallel to that of the Catholic Church."

Both Dr. Kaplan and Mr. Hurwitz seem to be afraid of diversities, differences. Although themselves prominent as dissenters, they seek for a unity, a reconciliation: we must have one great big Synagogue, or one great big Community. Dr. Kaplan would even like to see all the Jews of the whole world organized into one world community, with representation in the United Nations Assembly. And they are afraid of the new bugbear: secularism.

But American Jews will not agree to look for leaders solely among rabbis, or among any other one group or profession—they will take their leaders where they find them. American Jews will not agree to form one Community, claiming the right to bind and loosen, to elect and reject. They will not vest in anyone the authority to excommunicate Dr. Kaplan or to burn his books. They do not want a "closed shop" in Jewish life.

Religious freedom, as American Jews interpret it in their daily relations with fellow Jews and with non-Jews, means the recognition that religion is a matter for which one is only accountable to one's Maker. Even the non-believing Jew is still a Jew if he identifies himself as such. I know atheist Jews who belong to Orthodox synagogues, and Orthodox Jews who belong to Reform temples. The spirit bloweth where it listeth. Some will say this is anarchy. American Jews call it freedom. It is something of transcendent value that we have garnered from democratic philosophy as expressed by Jefferson, Madison, and the Justices of the Supreme Court.

I SHOULD like to suggest that this lesson of American religious freedom and cultural pluralism, which we American Jews have learned, might well be studied by the Jews of the State of Israel. There are enough straws in the wind to indicate that many influential Jews in Israel could profit by it.

The *Reconstructionist* (April 1, 1949) reports a ruling made by the Israeli Minister

of the Interior, as the official in charge of immigration, that calls for the compulsory circumcision of uncircumcised male children of immigrants. (A subsequent order provides that the government shall pay for the circumcision.) The same magazine also reports (March 18, 1949) a case of a young woman whose marriage has been prohibited. The woman was a childless widow, and was interested in an offer of marriage, but the rabbis, following Deuteronomy 25:5, have prohibited her from marrying until her late husband's brother, now a mere infant, reaches the age of thirteen, the Biblical age of legal consent for males, and chooses to give her *halitzah*; for the Biblical law provides that, if a man dies, leaving a childless widow, his brother must marry her, and their first-born son must be given the name of the deceased man. Should the brother refuse to marry her, he may be released from his obligation by engaging in "a degrading ceremony." Since marriage and divorce are matters that rest in the jurisdiction of the Orthodox rabbis, the woman is prohibited from marrying.

In the March 1949 *Jewish Horizon*, published by the Orthodox Hapoel Hamizrachi of America, Rabbi S. Z. Shragai, member of the Jewish Agency executive, writes that "the overwhelming majority of the State [of Israel] is in favor of retaining religious marriages, for it is appreciated that without them the Jewish people might well find itself divided into two sections. One section would in course of time, when Arab standards will have been raised, intermarry with them, become in fact a new Palestinian people and cease altogether to exist as a Jewish people. The second section would adhere strictly to Jewish family life and uphold the basis of the existence of the original Jewish people. And so to prevent such a tragic split as this, a large proportion of our irreligious leaders have given their consistent support to the retention of religious marriages."

What an amazing statement this is! The "irreligious leaders" of Israel are against permitting civil marriages and favor placing marriage in the exclusive jurisdiction of the Orthodox rabbis because rabbis will refuse

to officiate at the marriage of a Jew and an Arab, and so intermarriage will not be possible, and thus "the existence of the original Jewish people" will be assured!

This is the sort of thinking and behavior which once led Morris R. Cohen to assert: "Nationalistic Zionism demands not complete individual liberty for the Jew, but group autonomy. . . . Indeed, how could a Jewish Palestine allow complete religious freedom of intermarriage, and free non-Jewish immigration, without losing its very reason for existence? A national Jewish Palestine must necessarily mean a state founded on a peculiar race, a tribal religion, and a mystic belief in a peculiar soil. . . ."

Professor Cohen went, I believe, too far. Zionism does not necessarily mean tribalism. The people in the state of Israel have yet to show that they cannot meet the challenge to build a society in which individual freedom may be enjoyed to a maximum. "Zionists," said Dr. Cohen, "have no confidence that with complete toleration and full freedom Judaism can hold its own in the open field." I would put this in question form rather than as a bald statement, and would ask: Have the Jews in Israel no confidence that with complete toleration and freedom Judaism can hold its own in the open field?

IN FEBRUARY, Rabbi Shragai and Rabbi Isaac Werfel, leader of the Labor Mizrachi party and head of the immigration section of the Jewish Agency, were interviewed by some thirty representatives of the Jewish press in New York. They were asked how they viewed the role of Orthodox Judaism in the state of Israel. Their reply was that the aim and object of Orthodox Jewry is to introduce laws which would enforce Sabbath and dietary law observance, and which would vest in the Orthodox rabbis and their religious courts jurisdiction pertaining to marriage and divorce and other aspects of family life. They stressed the fact that civil marriages must not be tolerated, and stated that children born of a marriage not performed by an Orthodox rabbi would be treated as illegitimate, and illegitimately born

persons could not be married to legitimately born Jews. They emphasized their belief that the only guarantee for the preservation of the Jewish people and its "purity" is a law prohibiting civil marriages and divorces.*

Some months ago, the Orthodox Mizrahi News Bureau in New York reported that the Israeli authorities had decided not to grant immigration certificates in cases where one member of a married couple is not a Jew. Exceptions were to be made if the non-Jewish mate had been active in helping Jews during the destruction of the Jewish communities in Europe. Even in such cases, however, express permission would have to be obtained from the Minister of Immigration, and, following the grant of such permission, the non-Jewish man or woman would be required to accept the Jewish faith.

Following protests against this order, made by some Jewish publications in this country, England, and Canada, the Israeli authorities issued statements to water it down. The Immigration Department said that each case of immigration of mixed couples "is subject to individual clarification and decision"; and Rabbi Werfel stated that while non-Jewish members of mixed marriages will not be barred as immigrants, "visa preferences will be accorded to Jewish immigrants and their families. . . ." Since there will be no dearth of Jewish immigrants for years to come, it is apparent that, although the formula will be different, the practice might well be the same. Rabbi Werfel added an "explanation": the purpose of the order is to keep out of Israel former Nazis who sought conversion

*The Israeli Minister of Immigration has banned the arrival of vessels on the Sabbath. "Saturday is the official day of rest in the State of Israel," he explained in the Knesset (Assembly). "Let the shipping companies arrange their itineraries so that their vessels reach here on week-days." At the same time the Minister of Religion stated that buses operating under state franchises, and railways owned by the government, should be idle on the Sabbath. Orthodox spokesmen maintain "that the state should be bound by Biblical laws of Sabbath-observance and Kashruth (dietary laws), and that the government should concede to the religious courts (Jewish, Moslem, or Christian) complete jurisdiction over matters of personal status, including marriage, divorce, wills, and alimony" (New York Times, May 1, 1949).

to Judaism so as to gain admission to Israel!

All these orders and prohibitions are consistent with the provision in the Israeli draft Constitution that the Jewish community shall have religious courts which are to have exclusive jurisdiction over the members of the Jewish community in all matters of personal status. This means, as Morris R. Cohen anticipated, not individual liberty but group autonomy; that is, a Jew will have rights and duties not as an individual, but as a member of the Jewish community. Whether he be Orthodox or Reform, believer or atheist, in matters of personal status he is to be subject to the Orthodox rabbinate and the traditional laws of Judaism. (Of the three non-Orthodox rabbis in Israel, two are not permitted to officiate at marriages or other functions.) The rabbinic judges receive their salaries and the funds for the maintenance of their courts from the government treasury; and since state and religion are so intimately related, there is a Minister of Religion. Religion has thus become a department of the state apparatus.

AMONG the most efficient enemies of religion are the misguided zealots who would use compulsion to insure, as they think, the future of their faith. To them may well be applied the judgment of Brandeis: "The greatest dangers to liberty lurk in insidious encroachment by men of zeal, well-meaning, but without understanding." They in Israel who would use the law to coerce the spirit will make Judaism hateful to thousands who otherwise, in a context of freedom, might find Judaism attractive and valuable. They may end by making Judaism become associated with what is mean and reactionary.

We used to hear it said that whether or not you like strawberries and cream, "comes the Revolution, you'll eat strawberries and cream!" In the same way, it appears, Orthodox leaders in Israel say, "whether or not you like kosher meat, comes the State of Israel, you'll eat kosher meat!" Now I personally do not eat non-kosher food, but I make my choice as a free man; I choose kosher food with a free will; and since I

choose it freely, my act has spiritual value to me. If I had no choice but to eat only kosher food, because the law so decreed, I would choke on it. Having eaten the bread of freedom, the bread of compulsion would be bread of affliction. In this spirit, too, do I observe the Sabbath; for only as a spiritually free person can I say: "Welcome, Bride Sabbath." No law enacted by an assembly can designate any one day as the "Queen of days"—no more than the Soviet Politburo can decide in favor of one scientific theory among competing theories.

Because we are endowed with free will, we are, according to Jewish tradition, higher in the scale of spiritual existence than any mere angel and more valuable in the eyes of God. If the Jews in Israel should obey all the laws of the rabbis, even as the angels do the will of God, yet if they should do so only because they cannot help themselves, only because the laws of the country coerce their wills and limbs, then they will be less than human in the scale of spiritual existence. Do not the rabbis in Israel know that the Jews in Israel must be given freedom to sin, for if a man has no freedom to sin, he has no freedom to do good?

Not only the Israeli Jew, but Judaism, too, needs freedom. In freedom Judaism can flourish. Make it a state religion, with its precepts enforced by civil law, and it will be a captive Judaism; it will languish and invite a *Kulturkampf*. Zionist Jews, Arnold Toynbee has said, are a fossil—"a fragment of a fossil. . . ." Toynbee is wrong about the Jews, as he is about a good many other peoples who are remote from his Anglican Episcopal Church. But the Jews in Zion can make Toynbee's judgment come true. In their hands Judaism may yet become a fossil. To prevent this from happening, they must make of Israel what both Jews and Gentiles have made of America: "*a freie medina*."

Jews in the United States have learned to live in a unity which, as Professor Kallen has said, orchestrates our differences. Our differences are not wiped out; there is no *Gleichschaltung*; yet we do constitute a com-

munity. Now and then in a crisis some persons or groups will over-reach. Before the State of Israel came into existence, it appeared at times as if the members of the American Council for Judaism thought of themselves as the only loyal Americans in the Jewish community. This was an unfortunate impression to create. At the same time Zionists appeared to believe that they alone among Americans were loyal Jews. This, too, was an unfortunate impression to create. American Zionists were loyal Americans, just as anti-Zionists were loyal Jews.

But the crisis of 1946-1947 was one without precedent, and things were said and done that are not typical of American Jews. There are sharp differences among us, but we generally recognize the fact that it is good that this is so. It is the differences among us that make of the Jewish community an orchestra instead of a solo instrument. The differences add a zest to our lives, and sparks of truth fly where opinions clash. The important thing is that we act "*le-shmo*," for the sake of Heaven, for the sake of principles, and not for expediency.

American Jews have made their contribution to the American philosophy of cultural pluralism. But they have received from America even more than they have given, and they would like to share this heritage with the Israelis.

HIGH government officials of Israel have on more than one occasion stressed the distinction between Jews outside Palestine and Israelis; it would seem useful and necessary to make equally clear the distinction inside Israel between the Israeli as Jew and the Israeli as Israeli (Jew, Moslem, or Christian). Separating synagogue and state in Israel and adopting the philosophy of liberalism and cultural pluralism would seem to be a major and inescapable step in avoiding confusion between Judaism and Israelism.

Until this distinction is made, we must expect some embarrassing aberrations. Judge Morris Rothenberg, acting national chairman of the United Palestine Appeal and former President of the Zionist Organization of

America, furnished us with a public example of what sometimes may happen when an American Jew acts without full awareness of his responsibilities. When Ernest Bevin arrived in New York several months ago, three Jewish boys attempted to pelt him with tomatoes. The boys were arrested and brought before Judge Rothenberg in the Magistrate's Court. Judge Rothenberg disqualified himself and refused to accept a plea of guilty from the defendants, saying: "I have such a feeling of sorrow for the tens of thousands of survivors of the Nazi terror whom Mr. Bevin prevented from finding refuge in the Jewish homeland and caused to be imprisoned on the island of Cyprus, where they endured long months of further sufferings and humiliation, that I do not feel I can properly exercise the judicial function in these cases."

Now Judge Rothenberg knew, as all other Americans knew, that Bevin was invited to come by the United States government to sign, in his capacity as British Foreign Secretary, the Atlantic Pact, on which the peace of the United States and of the world (including Israel) may well depend.

As a judge who has taken an oath to uphold the laws of the United States, Judge Rothenberg's duty was clear. But instead of censuring their hooliganism (to which they were ready to plead guilty), Judge Rothenberg entered what was virtually an advocate's plea on their behalf.*

If the separation between synagogue and state is made in Israel, the world will be able to see the Jew in the Israeli Jew in the same

way in which we see the Jew in the Polish Jew or Hungarian Jew or Canadian Jew or American Jew, and we shall be able to maintain our spiritual bond with them and to seek their peace, prosperity, and welfare. But if synagogue and state should become one, there will be a division among us: some will see the Israeli merged in the Jew; more of us, however, will see the Jew merged in the Israeli. If this should come to pass, one fears a spiritual misfortune to them and to us beyond description. There would develop a breach between Israel and Galut as great as that between East and West. No Torah will come forth out of Zion. It will be a strange, frightening, and dreadful phenomenon: not the Jews in Galut, but the Jews in Israel, will have become "assimilated." As one who sought and prayed for the establishment of the State of Israel, I can only envisage such an event with a sense of personal, as well as universal, tragedy.

IN 1919, just a generation ago, Horace M. Kallen answered Morris R. Cohen, stating that the springs of Zionist affiliation among American Jews were to be found, not in tribalism, but in liberalism. American life, Kallen said, "just insofar as it has been liberal and liberating, has formed the dynamics and inspiration of the effort of American Jews in behalf of Zion. . . ." But now, thirty years later, we see forces working among American and Israeli Jews which seek to pervert the ideals of Brandeis, Mack, and Kallen; we see Jews who are attempting to compel the fulfilment of Morris Cohen's prophecy of moral doom.

However, there are, we must remember, counter-forces among us. The Jewish conscience will neither slumber nor sleep: Zionism *will* be liberalism and not tribalism. It *will* be because we shall will it so. For the expression of this Jewish will and conscience, Zionists, anti-Zionists, and non-Zionists can and ought to unite—unite to maintain Judaism as a universal religion and the Jewish people as a world-wide spiritual fellowship.

*When I made this point in a speech recently, Judge Rothenberg replied: "I acted as I did in the interest of fairness, because I had repeatedly given public expression of resentment against Mr. Bevin's grievous hurt to Israel in admittedly having supported the policy of furnishing arms to the enemies of Israel." I am not criticizing Judge Rothenberg for withdrawing from the case. My criticism is directed against his statement, in which he made heroes of the defendants, although they were ready to plead guilty. In its context the incident is cited only as an illustration. I am attacking a danger, illustrated by the incident, rather than Judge Rothenberg.

WHY DEMOCRACY IS LOSING IN GERMANY

Behind the Recent Elections

A. R. L. GURLAND

THE German federal elections of August 14 marked the difficult birth, thirty years after the promulgation of the Weimar Constitution, of a new German republic in the greater part of a dismembered Germany. Unhappily, few believe in its possibilities for success, and fewer still that the long sought-for German democracy will be ushered in under its auspices.

When the Allied forces broke into Germany, many months of preparation, thought, and research had already been devoted by political analysts and observers to the problem of "democratizing" and "denazifying" Germany. Various bits of policy already existed, and more were fashioned in the years

TODAY, four years after the end of World War II, one can get general agreement that the denazification policy of the Western powers, conceived as the first step toward democratizing Germany, has proved a dismal failure. Were the objectives of the original policy utopian, were the wrong men put in charge of the undertaking, were the methods used unsound? A.R.L. GURLAND here addresses himself to these questions, and offers a striking analysis of the social, political, and economic factors that must be taken into account in any effort to reconstruct Germany along democratic lines. Dr. Gurland, who was born in Moscow, studied at the universities of Berlin and Leipzig, and was an active worker in the field of labor journalism and education in pre-Hitler Germany. In 1947 he took part in a study of bureaucratization in postwar Germany; and recently he completed a comprehensive study of postwar population trends and labor union developments in Western Germany for the ECA. Dr. Gurland participated in studies of anti-Semitism conducted by the Institute of Social Research, and is the author of "Technological Trends and Economic Structure under National Socialism" (in *Studies in Science and Philosophy*, 1941), and co-author of *The Fate of Small Business in Nazi Germany* (Washington, 1943).

of occupation. The immediate division of Germany between East and West, and the eventual subjugation of the East to the Russian conception of "democracy," raised enormous problems. Yet it still seemed possible for a democratic society to arise in the West alone. Everything, or so it appeared, had been destroyed. A new commonwealth could be built from the ground up.

Today, such hopes are all but forgotten. The new-born Western German state is today merely accepted on sufferance by the forty-six or forty-seven million people crowded within its borders. No one is enthusiastic about it, no one in Germany really wants it. The political scene is characterized by apathetic indifference; by emotional opposition, in all quarters, to the Military Government rule of the Allied powers; and by the political and economic predominance of authentic reactionary elements. To be specific: today the administration of Germany is more firmly than ever in the hands of a conservative and unimaginative bureaucracy; the political power of the churches is greater than under the Empire, the Republic, or the Nazi dictatorship; the economy is in the hands of more or less the same people who ran it for Hitler. The conservative Christian Democratic party, and groups further to the Right, triumphed in the recent elections, with the support of the churches and to the open satisfaction of American authorities. How explain this sorry outcome of four years of attempted democratization?

Parliaments and Bureaucracies

CONCEIVABLY things would not have been different if the occupying powers had left the re-establishment of democracy in Germany to German democratic groups, German legislation, and German administra-

tion. But in retrospect, one can see that the Allied military administrators to whom this task was entrusted neglected important lessons of Germany's political history and ignored whatever elements were left of the pre-Nazi German democratic tradition.

The basic mistake was in failing to realize that the German democratic tradition is essentially a parliamentary one; that all democratic progress in Germany had been linked to extending parliamentary prerogatives and privileges at the expense of the executive branch; and that limitation of democratic government in Germany always began with the encroachment of appointed bureaucracies upon the powers of elected parliaments. Conversely, it was the widening of the powers of allegedly "non-partisan" and "non-political" civil servants, military men, and other uncontrollable bureaucrats that tended to culminate in the absolute rule of a bureaucratic machine, possibly revamped or remodeled to suit the political group in power, but at all times resting on the inherited and immovable base of a rigid civil service system. The instability of the Weimar Republic and its weakness in fending off the Nazi assault was in large measure the outcome of the "non-partisan" tradition of the civil service, which successfully resisted parliamentary control and deprived democratic political parties, when they were in power, of a reliable administrative machinery.

But the Western military governments, apparently taken in by the Nazi legend, preferred to believe rather that the collapse of the Weimar Republic had been hastened by a multitude of political parties, by the weakness of the republican government's executive, by the encroachment of politics on the civil service—i.e., by too much representative government. They decided that a democratic Germany needed a strong executive based on a presumed independent, "non-political" civil service. Instead of attacking the legal foundations of the permanent bureaucratic caste, they immediately re-established an administrative machinery operated by permanent civil servants, in order to "take civil service out of politics" and to institute a "separation

of powers" which, while theoretically designed to prevent the delegation of legislative and judicial power to agents of the executive branch, actually placed the civil service bureaucracy out of reach of legislative and judicial controls.

German *Land* (provincial) governments, first appointed by occupation authorities and later elected by popular vote, were prevailed upon to enact civil service codes with much more rigid guarantees of special privileges for officials than had been enjoyed under Imperial, Weimar, or Nazi civil service regulations. Instead of insisting on the inviolable sovereignty of parliamentary bodies, the only possible basis of German democracy, the military administrators hallowed the social status and enhanced the political prestige of career bureaucrats, making their position impregnable.

IN THE American Zone, German legislation protecting reinstatement and pension claims of civil servants was maintained in force for those not classed as active Nazis; since the American authorities, as a rule, did not interfere with the implementation of German laws by German agencies, this made the protection of the rights of all "cleared" officials mandatory. In the British Zone, where Military Government controls extended to all echelons of the German administration, removal of reactionary officials by German governments was prevented by British administrators, who contended that the occupiers alone should weed out Nazi elements, and that those whom they had not removed were protected by their civil service status.

The British authorities similarly destroyed the sound democratic tradition of German municipal government by transforming key elective offices into civil service career jobs. And all through the British Zone, civil servants were prohibited from active participation in political life (taking part in election campaigns, and so on); this not only prevented the civil service from being exposed to the political climate of a functioning democracy, but also directly undermined the

strength of democratic groups.* At a later date, American Military Government followed suit by persuading the constitution-makers in Bonn to make officials of the Bizonal Administration ineligible for Western Germany's federal parliament. Concerned with introducing the separation of powers, the American and British administrators failed to realize that on the Continent democracy has always been based on the supremacy of parliament, and that the holding of both elective and appointive offices is intrinsic to this tradition.

Neither of the Western military governments favored unionization of civil servants, which would have helped break the political isolation of the bureaucratic caste, since in the single industrial-type union which until recently represented public service workers, civil servants rubbed shoulders with non-civil-service, free-contract salary earners, and manual workers. As late as the beginning of this year, Western occupation authorities issued a civil service code for the Bizonal Economic Administration (the kernel of the future Trizonal government) which made civil service status mandatory for all non-manual workers employed by bizonal agencies, and at the same time abolished collective bargaining for civil servants. A good Weimar tradition, which had found recognition in the British and American zones† after the re-constitution of labor unions in 1945, was thus abandoned.

The Fate of Self-Government

As a counterweight to the bureaucratic government machinery handed down from generation to generation since the days of the first post-feudal administrative structures, German liberal and labor movements at an early stage had developed an extensive network of self-governing institutions. These had prospered under the Weimar Republic, and were still functioning well in those years of depression and mass unemployment when the top structure of the central government was already beginning to crumble under the Nazi offensive. On the one hand, there existed an extensive and highly perfected sys-

tem of municipal institutions which played an important part in economic activity, public welfare, and public education, and performed a number of governmental functions. These institutions were operated by democratic city governments, in which the Nazi party could not gain strong footholds up to the very last days of the Weimar Republic. Similarly, a large part of the social and economic activities of the Weimar "welfare state" were conducted by autonomous bodies endowed with limited public authority. These agencies were administered by the elected representatives of employers, employees, and consumers, and by representatives of the municipalities and the regional administrative bodies. They ran labor offices (employment agencies with extended functions), adjudicated labor disputes, and administered the social insurance system as well as some public-owned corporations.

To re-establish the democratic process, it should have seemed imperative to transfer as many executive powers as possible to local organs of self-government and to the democratically constituted agencies for social welfare and economic controls destroyed by the Nazis. A program of such scope, however, was not within the perspective of either the American or British military administrators,

*The Social Democrats were particularly hard hit. In contrast to the British Labor party, the Social Democratic party has very few followers among the educated middle classes. Whatever intellectuals the Social Democrats had were badly needed for government work in 1945 and were placed in civil service positions. It also has to be borne in mind that civil-service status in Germany extends to a number of professional and semi-professional occupations not necessarily treated as civil servants in other countries: all teachers at all levels of the educational system; technical, medical, research personnel in all national, state, and municipal services; many categories of employees in public-owned enterprise, etc. Traditionally, most Social Democratic followers among intellectuals had been in these categories. The exclusion of civil servants from political activity under British Military Government directives thus deprived the Social Democrats of the services of an intellectual elite at a time when right-of-center parties had at their disposal all the intellectual talent they needed.

†In the French Zone, greater laxity and lack of uniformity had prevailed from the start, both in the enforcement of civil service codes and in defining the scope of collective bargaining.

who were recruited—with but few exceptions—from career officers, small-town businessmen, commercial lawyers, British colonial officials, and junior faculty members of the smaller American colleges. Acting under strategic directives that aimed chiefly at the elimination of Nazi chieftains, and answerable to public opinion at home, which was also focused almost exclusively on the denazification issue, the military administrators were left to their own trial-and-error methods in carrying out the broader aspects of policy for strengthening German democracy.

In the minds of many American administrators, Germany was to be granted the blessings of separation of powers, of checks and balances, and a strong executive, “with no nonsense.” “No nonsense” meant no participation by semi-public or private organizations in the exercise of governmental powers. To British generals and India Service officials, the Germans were “natives” to be ruled strictly but correctly, to be given a native civil service under orders from London, to be allowed (for educational purposes mainly) consultative pseudo-parliaments without effective powers over the executive, and to be taught to separate politics from economics.

So the self-administered organs of social insurance and the autonomous central office for unemployment insurance and labor-market control were not re-introduced. While labor courts were re-established, the creation of supervisory labor-management bodies for the coordination of court and mediation practices was not permitted. Important public utilities and large sectors of public enterprise were removed—for “decartelization” purposes!—from the control of municipal corporations, and placed under the trusteeship of appointed officials not subject to democratic controls.*

Democratically elected works councils, be-

latedly permitted in April 1946 under Allied Control Council Order No. 22, were prevented from exercising any control over industrial management, and from extending beyond the confines of a single plant. This prohibition prevented the formation of overall works councils for huge combines with many plants, which might have been helpful in limiting the “excessive concentration of economic power” prohibited on paper under American Military Government Law No. 56 and British Military Government Ordinance No. 78.

The *Land* Versus the Nation

THE monetary chaos and economic disintegration caused by the original Allied de-industrialization policy and aggravated, after this policy had been abandoned by Britain and the United States, by the impossibility of achieving quadripartite agreement on currency and production, reduced municipal self-government to bankruptcy and impotence. And the little social and political prestige municipal self-government still retained was shattered by the excessive power the Western military governments vested in a synthetically inflated *Land* bureaucracy, chosen as the main governmental pillar of a “decentralized,” “federal” state structure. Instead of a simplified central administration, with substantial executive powers delegated to local elected officials, the occupying powers set up a system of autonomous states, based on previously existing or newly created states, and furnished them with clumsy machinery and inflated staffs. Deprived by Military Government of the power and authority to coordinate policies on a nationwide level, to plan and carry through vital economic programs, or to assure the essentials of living for a disintegrating country’s starving population, they were nevertheless given ample power to usurp the traditional prerogatives of local self-government, to harass and paralyze local administration, to take over the rights and privileges of municipalities, and to strangle local self-government by centralizing taxation.

The military administrators’ efforts to

*As late as November 10, 1948, Military Government Law No. 75, which provided for the turning over of Ruhr coal and steel properties to German management, retained public-owned utility concerns under the management of appointive officials not answerable to any organs of democratic government.

shape a "federal Germany," composed of a union of recreated and created "states," out of thin air, had even more disastrous results. In Germany, "states rights" has always been the weapon of the most backward, most reactionary groups; the Nazi movement had from the beginning been protected by reactionary *Land* governments from the democratic central government's reprisals. It achieved power in a number of non-Prussian states before it attacked Social Democratic Prussia, for, contrary to general belief, anti-republican and anti-democratic officialdom was less powerful in the national and in the Prussian administration than in many of the *Länder*. When the central government was smashed by Nazism's collapse in 1945, the *Land* administrations remained more or less intact. No removal of "denazifiables" could change the permanent reactionary complexion of these bureaucratic elites. To center the reconstruction of the German government on *Land* administrations was tantamount, under the circumstances, to reinforcing the most anti-democratic girders of the old state edifice.

The "federalization" program was no American Military Government invention; it was the last remnant of quadripartite policy. Wartime propaganda, in particular that influenced by Soviet sources and anti-labor German and Austrian exiles operating with the blessings of the Vatican hierarchy, had revived the 19th-century bogey of "Prussian centralism" as the cause of Nazism. To substitute a loosely knit federation of autonomous states for a "centralized, unitary, Prussia-dominated German Reich" became an Allied war objective. It took the Western Allies years to realize that the dismemberment of Germany's governmental structure was exactly what the Soviets wanted, and that Russian desires coincided here with those of French De Gaullists and French industrial monopolists, particularly in steel and chemicals. "States rights" in Western Germany today benefits semi-Nazi business interests, reactionary political groups, and an anti-democratic ecclesiastical hierarchy. At the same time, "federalization" was a special

favorite of those small-time machine politicians in American uniform whose political thinking was limited by the formula, "What's good enough for the folks back home ought to be good enough for the Krauts."

In this way, one of the less important strata of the bureaucracy was enormously expanded and strengthened. More susceptible to the influence of regional special interest groups than a centralized government machine would have been, the state governments in a number of places became mere appendages of local business interests, obedient tools in the hands of those very same profiteers of Nazism whom the occupation authorities had failed to dislodge from the economy. Since no national central administration existed, eleven corresponding administrations were set up on the *Land* level, often working at cross purposes, and multiplying bureaucratic interference with social and economic processes. In an economy so complex and so interdependent as that of 20th-century Germany, the absence of central executive and legislative powers put insuperable obstacles in the way of economic recovery, prolonging the chaos, misery, and starvation. Anti-Allied, nationalistic, and simple Hitlerite sentiment was bound to increase.

Denazification Reversed

DENAZIFICATION itself, which many Military Government people thought would be a sufficient insurance of democracy, turned out to be enormously more complicated than anyone had imagined. The ineffective procedures used, and the repeated changes necessitated by the inadequacy of the original plans, impaired the prestige of democratic government and those who supported it. The Nazi leaders and major Nazi criminals had vanished without leaving a trace or were handed over to international jurisdiction, a procedure which effectually removed them from the range of interest of the German public.

Actually, denazification was limited to the personnel of public services, without regard to the political importance of the particular

job or branch. Long drawn-out judicial proceedings were instituted upon merely formal charges of having belonged to this or that Nazi organization, and innumerable officials were removed from office pending investigation and trial. If the original plans had been followed, denazification would have affected millions of persons, and it would have taken many years to process their cases.

It was soon clear, however, that it was impossible to try all those originally subject to denazification, while the resumption of any economic and administrative routine was crippled by general uncertainty as to the fate of "denazifiabiles." The number of persons subject to denazification was again and again radically reduced, and the resulting uncertainty dissipated whatever zeal German prosecutors and judges brought to their task. Since court practice under the Military Government's Law of Liberation was guided by the formal considerations of party membership rather than by facts establishing individual guilt, prominent supporters of the Nazis might go scot-free, while small-fry were severely penalized. At a later point, for certain categories of defendants, court trial was dispensed with altogether on payment of a fine (negligible since it was payable in depreciated currency).

Denazification became farcical. But the farce left tens of thousands of people in suspense and uncertainty for years, and made them bitterly resentful of "Allied interference" and "democratic justice." On the other hand, democrats and anti-Nazis, who during the dark years of Nazi rule had dreamed of ultimate justice and retribution, were filled with indignation over what they considered a tremendous travesty of justice.

As the number of those acquitted or classed as mere "followers" grew larger, more and more civil servants who had been suspended or removed from their positions returned, claiming reinstatement with the same rating and pay. On the whole, their claims were valid under the civil service codes re-established and strengthened under Military Government pressure. Furthermore, German de-

partment heads often had no recourse but to reinstate them, for pensioning them off with full retirement pay long before they had reached the age of retirement involved expenditures that no responsible administrator could endorse and which Allied budget officers would not approve. It also saved money to discharge the democratic postwar appointees, since most of the newcomers had been hired under rescindable employment contracts without civil service status, or had not yet acquired appreciable retirement claims.*

The return of former denazifiabiles began on a major scale in 1947 and continued through 1948, i.e., until after the currency reform (June 20, 1948). When the nominally high salaries of top civil servants regained considerable purchasing power, it was the bulk of the denazifiabiles who profited; many postwar appointees who had gone hungry for years found themselves out of jobs just at the time when unemployment went up steeply and new jobs were hard to come by. Many who had offered their services in 1945 to replace the Nazis and get the administration going after the general breakdown were penalized, while those removed from office as major or minor Nazi offenders found themselves rewarded. This did not necessarily reveal pro-Nazi bias on the part of German cabinet ministers or department heads; the paradoxical outcome of denazification was rather an unavoidable consequence of the salvaging of the bureaucratic caste by the Western occupying powers.†

*As early as 1947, the present writer was repeatedly told by indubitably democratic German administrators that they were compelled to keep overt Nazi sympathizers on their staffs because budget appropriations did not permit them to pay for two men—a pre-1945 official and a postwar appointee—for one job.

†In the French Zone, where denazification was taken less seriously, considerably fewer officials were removed or suspended in 1945, and consequently, considerably fewer came back in recent years. In the Soviet Zone civil service prerogatives were completely eliminated, but Soviet administrators and their German puppets smashed the old caste only to replace it with a new one, made up of corrupted, intimidated, and terrorized yes-men. The only place in Germany where genuinely democratic institutions function without being ob-

Economic Profiteers of Nazism

IT WAS, however, not the inadequacy of the denazification of the civil service that hurt most. The bureaucratic machinery had remained more or less the same under both the Weimar Republic and the Nazi Reich; to allow it to remain was consonant with tradition and mass inertia, in spite of the disrepute into which the once proverbially honest and incorruptible officialdom had fallen as a result of Nazi lawlessness and the large-scale corruption of the postwar era of black and gray markets. It was primarily at the Nazi bosses and those who profited from Nazism that the mass resentment generated by the sufferings and hardships imposed by five years of warfare and crushing defeat was directed.

Most Germans, the former organized workers, the politically neutral, and even many who had been Nazi sympathizers in pre-Nazi days, had come to hate the domination of the profiteers of the Nazi regime, the industrial monopolists, the executives of the industrial and banking combines, the plant managers and production bosses, those who grew richer and more indispensable to the political rulers and more powerful the longer the war lasted. To the average citizen, these had been the genuine beneficiaries of Nazi rule. Doubtful democrats were in full agreement with consistent and militant anti-Nazis on this one point: the industrial bosses had to be removed.

But on this very point disillusionment was rapid, irretrievable, and universal. Many of the profiteers, having avoided official connection with the Nazi regime, were not subject to removal under Allied regulations and were left free to go about their business as if nothing had happened. Many others, removed from their positions because of Nazi

connections, still remained employable for "ordinary labor"; and since the Western powers would not stand for management control by works councils (which were completely non-Nazi and Social Democratic in their overwhelming majority, and included a sprinkling of Communists and Christian unionists), Nazi bosses and industry technicians were listed on the payrolls as "ordinary laborers" and kept on in their previous managerial, supervisory, professional jobs. Under inflationary conditions it did not make the slightest difference to the "removed" Nazi profiteer whether he was paid two thousand reichsmarks a month as an executive or fifty marks a week as an ordinary laborer. The "penalized" offender continued to enjoy his palatial house, and the car and chauffeur and expense account supplied by the firm, together with his share of black market supplies and profits. In an economy of all-around scarcity, governmental controls were operated with extreme laxity, "honest business" as operated by the old bosses became part of the black and gray market boom, and ruthless profiteering continued, daily rewarding the same men who had been responsible for Nazism, war, and economic catastrophe.

Effectively—though often unintentionally—protected by occupation authorities, Third Reich profiteers have continued to hold key positions in economic life. The little that the military governments did to "de-concentrate"* economic power—the breaking-up of the steel combines, the seizure of Ruhr coal concerns, the parceling out of the I. G. Farben chemical trust—has not contributed noticeably to the replacement of the top economic executives of the Nazi era with new

*The Allied wartime objective aiming at breaking up the concentration of economic power in Germany was misleadingly termed "decartelization." In actual fact, decartelization, both in the international and domestic field, has been carried out to the limit, and the American Military Government may well claim credit for it. Cartels, that is to say, price-fixing agreements and combinations in restraint of trade, no longer exist in Western Germany. But this has rarely affected concentration of ownership and control in general, for cartels are only one of the means of concentrating economic power. Most huge trusts and combines still operate—under old management.

structed by the dead weight of a caste of appointed and irremovable lifetime officials is Western Berlin. In Berlin, all the special rights and privileges of the old civil service were abrogated in all sectors in an early stage of quadripartite occupation, and the Social Democratic administration of the Western sectors of the city has proved quite capable of keeping the democratic process safe from bureaucratic encroachments.

men. The only noteworthy change is in the relative political importance and public prominence of the representatives of the major industrial interests. Industrial executives too intimately connected with the Nazi elite, such as the managerial personnel of the Flick, Mannesmann, and Thyssen industrial empires, have given way in public functions to those with less tarnished records, particularly Catholic industrialists and bankers who maneuvered cautiously enough to keep their *Fragebogen* unsoiled by Nazi affiliations. As "reliable non-Nazis," men who had profited from the Nazi war economy, from Aryanization, and from imperialist spoliation are prominent in the leadership of the Christian Democratic Union (the ruling party in the Bizonal Area and the French Zone), in governmental agencies of economic control, and in the Military Government-appointed trusteeship of the Ruhr steel and coal industries.*

*A few examples: Dr. Günter Henle, one of the chief executives of the Klöckner steel and machine-building combine and an in-law of the Klöckner family (whose older members represented the Catholic Center party in the pre-Nazi Reichstag), is a CDU member of the Bizonal Economic Council (the provisional parliament for the American and British Zones) and Military Government-appointed member of the Steel Trustee Association, which is charged with the reorganization of the Ruhr steel industry. Another CDU member of the Bizonal Economic Council is Dr. Robert Pferdmenes, owner of the Pferdmenes (formerly Levy) bank in Cologne and banker for another Catholic steel combine, the Otto Wolff firm. High in the councils of the CDU administration for the Bizonal Area is Dr. Otto Schniewind, a private banker who rose to financial prominence under the Nazis, formerly Marshall Plan liaison officer for the Bizonal Economic Administration, now chairman of the board of directors of the Bizonal Reconstruction Loan Corporation, which is in charge of government-supervised and government-financed investments. Dr. Schniewind's deputy on the board of the Reconstruction Loan Corporation is Hermann J. Abs, under the Nazis a member of the management board of the Deutsche Bank, active in the Nazi control of European banking in 1939-1942. Dr. Abs is also a Military Government-appointed member of the German Coal Mining Management (DKBL), which was commissioned by the military governors last July to prepare plans for the reorganization of the Ruhr coal industry. All these men are referred to in CDU circles as representing "pro-French" industrial interests. Their interlocking pre-war and wartime connections with French industrial groups now known to be De Gaullist and

The political power of big business—pro-Nazi, semi-Nazi, or profiting from the Nazis—rests on its close links to the Bizonal and *Land* bureaucracies and the CDU party machine. It is greatly strengthened by its intimate social contacts with high dignitaries of both the Catholic and Lutheran hierarchies, a connection which has helped the German magnates establish friendly relationships with British and American officials, for whom social intercourse with German industrial tycoons was less a matter of policy than of status and of pleasant dealings with educated, well-mannered, English-speaking, church-approved "socialites."

The Role of the Churches

WHILE "coddling" big industrialists was certainly not a part of Allied policy (and had not been envisaged in any known policy directives), the cultivation of contacts with the church hierarchies was. Military administrators, in the early stages of the occupation, treated churchmen as the only reliable Germans. They consulted them on political appointments, permitted them to operate political, educational, welfare, and youth organizations without special licenses, and supplied them with newsprint, publicity facilities, extra food, housing, gasoline, and so on. The church position on cultural and educational issues was accepted and implemented without discussion. This was the case in the French and British Zones, and pronouncedly so in the American Zone. The slow progress of decades towards the separation of church and state, and the elimination of ecclesiastical influence from public education, was smashed in a very few weeks. And this has been done by representatives of a country in which even "released time" for religious instruction outside of public schools is a constitutional issue.

The influence of the churches on cultural and educational activities in present-day Western Germany is stronger than anywhere

anti-American have been fairly well established. The party president of the CDU, Dr. Konrad Adenauer, Mayor of Cologne, always was close to the Cologne Catholic heavy-industry group.

else in Europe except Spain, and this influence is neither democratic nor particularly social-minded. This in a country where the population at large is perhaps more indifferent to churches and church matters than any other in Europe! That the majority of the Catholic clergy and a considerable minority of the Lutheran clergy were consistently—and sometimes vocally—anti-Nazi has not misled anyone into believing them adherents of a politically democratic society.

In politics, both the Catholic and the Lutheran hierarchies are closely connected with the Christian Democratic Union and its Christian Social Union affiliates, and they do not hesitate to use their church, youth, and relief organizations as political machines. Granted great influence on public education after the collapse of Nazi rule, the churches had considerable leeway in determining the spiritual and political content of public school teaching. As a consequence, education for democracy has very little place in the schools, and is confined mainly to adult education.

Today, public opinion in Western Germany is dominated by the interlocking membership of the church hierarchy, the CDU-CSU leadership, the top governmental bureaucracy, and big business, which together exercise control of most media of communication.

Neither socially nor ideologically can this new ruling element be termed National Socialist. Rather, it is nationalist and conservative in a pre-Nazi sense. That is to say, it is non-liberal and non-democratic, indifferent, when not opposed, to the building of a German democracy and to democratic philosophy.

Outlook for Democracy

WE MUST face the fact that the contradictions, vacillations, and reactionary manifestations of Western occupation policy have appallingly discredited democracy in Germany, both as a political system and an intellectual outlook. The denazification muddle dealt a heavy blow to the prestige of the democratic process. Never more than a trav-

esty of justice, it caused grievous harm to many people, gave rise to cruel charges and countercharges, slander and blackmail, and poisoned the moral and political atmosphere for years. Now that it has been abandoned, its noxious effluvia still float around, discouraging any open discussion of the Nazi past, any liberating release of repressed emotions of censure, self-reproach, or guilt.

Under the impact of Soviet terror, following the nightmare of Nazism, many Germans learned to cherish personal freedom and to hate excessive and never-ending governmental interference with individual fate. But the political inconsistency of Western occupation policies and the unforgivable delays in economic reconstruction have produced cynicism about democratic values. The moral authority of the Western democracies, attacked as "hypocritical," "selfish," "cowardly," and "ignorant of all things German," is now at its lowest.

In this climate, democratic renovation and moral rebirth cannot be imported from abroad. It must grow from the inner strength, the creativeness, the ethical and intellectual courage of democratic forces of Western Germany.

The Bonn Basic Law, the new constitution under which the Federal German Republic has been set up, is hardly likely to win new adherents for democracy. Ill-constructed, complicated, unclear, and verbose, it bears the marks of uneasy compromise. The governmental structure it erects is burdened with a bureaucracy too heavy to be genuinely democratic. Under the terms of the Bonn constitution, essential democratic freedoms and civil rights may be abrogated or suspended if their exercise is held to endanger the "basic democratic order," a circumlocution for the bizarre system designed in Bonn. Although American Military Government repeatedly objected to the delegation of legislative power to the executive branch, it has not disapproved "emergency legislation" clauses in the Bonn Constitution, under which, in the absence of a stable majority in the federal parliament, the federal executive, with the approval of representatives of

the *Land* governments,* would be empowered to legislate for a period of six months without dissolving the federal parliament or calling for new elections. The constitutional groundwork has been laid for the continuing evasion of parliamentary controls by joint maneuvers of federal and *Land* bureaucracies, and for the establishment of a solidly cemented bureaucratic rule.

IN THE federal parliament elected on August 14, the conservative coalition which headed the Bizonal Economic Administration will not control a majority. To remain in power, it will have to shift farther to the Right and rely on the support of extreme right-wing groups; and the bureaucrats' position will be reinforced by the instability of the parliamentary majority bloc.

Democratic institutions might still function on a limited scale in the future state, though fenced in by bureaucratic groups, provided economic recovery allays mass frustration and mass resentment. But prosperity is far off. Luxurious shop displays, which impress foreign visitors, cannot disguise widespread misery. Only the upper strata of German society enjoy high standards of living—remarkably high ones, to be sure. The 1948 economic upturn that followed monetary stabilization served only to deepen the contrast in living conditions between a thin layer at the top and the broad masses, since rationing and production and price controls were shortly eliminated by the British and American authorities.

Consequently, the post-stabilization spurt of industrial production has already been exhausted as a result of low purchasing power and the difficulties of developing a large export trade. Recorded unemployment has exceeded 1,200,000, and additional latent unemployment is about four million, in an econ-

omy that normally employs twelve million wage- and salary-earners. Meanwhile, additional dismantlings of industrial plants were announced immediately after the passage of the Bonn constitution, and essential industries (synthetic gasoline, butadiene, synthetic rubber), which would help cut imports and the necessity for exports, have been prohibited by the occupying powers. But democracy never thrives on economic distress and hopelessness.

The social and political set-up of the West German state, in many respects a product of military occupation, does not offer a promising basis for a democratic development. What forces in Germany, then, may be expected to strengthen the democratic spirit and revive moral values in public life and human relations? Western Germany has again a strong labor movement that supports democratic institutions and fights for social security, decent living standards, low-cost housing, and good schools free from church domination. And outside of politics and labor, there are various groups and individuals—particularly among the younger generation—who shun demagoguery and political immorality and long for stable values, ethical codes, social ideals.

Neither of these two forces dominates the political scene; both have seen many early postwar hopes wither away under military rule, and important sources of popular sympathy disappear under the pressure of material want and political disillusionment; both are wary of the Western powers' future policies with respect to Germany. The labor movement has had its fill of military arrogance, dismantlings, production restrictions, Allied vetoes of social legislation, Allied intervention in favor of Nazi profiteers, Allied sponsorship of insatiable church demands. The young people who grew up under Nazism and lost faith in Nazi tenets because the Nazi's war destroyed their childhood and adolescence, have matured prematurely. They are reserved and sceptical, abhor cant, loathe hypocrisy, and reject traditional patterns, whether of Nazi-German or Western-democratic make, and for this very reason

*These representatives are to be elected by the *Land* legislatures. But it is a traditional characteristic of German federal government that the representation of *Land* interests on the national level is handled by full-time career officials, i.e., bureaucrats, not parliamentarians. Whether they are appointed by *Land* cabinets (as was the case under the Kaiser and under Weimar) or elected by *Land* parliaments, is not likely to change the pattern.

resent being condescendingly "re-educated."

Both political-minded organized labor and non-political youth refuse—more than four years after the end of the war—to be bridled and tutored by occupation administrators and "world opinion," or censured for the guilt of those who, as a result of Western occupation policy, are still in power today ("the Nazis' accomplices" according to labor; "the generation of our parents" in the young people's parlance.) It is easy to label this nationalism, and to attack it. But it is not so much nationalism as a sound reaction to unpleasant reality; to denounce it as reprehensible, as is the habit of many makers of "world opinion," will only deepen the occupation-made gulf between the democratic forces in Germany and the Western democracies.

INSTEAD of making this gulf unbridgeable, everything must be done to close it. This requires a deeper insight into the cleavages between classes and generations in Germany, and the ability to understand the emotional reactions and emotional blind-spots of people who for years have been living under foreign military rule and whose future still depends on the decisions of others. The democratic forces in Germany cannot grow either in numbers or in moral fortitude unless they have grounds for hope for a better,

happier, less restricted future. The first step towards this is to make sure that the material help lent to Western Germany by democratic countries is not permitted to reinforce the private empires of Nazi-tainted big business but goes to the people and is put to use through democratic institutions, cooperatives, municipalities, democratically constituted social welfare agencies; that economic reconstruction plans be developed in close cooperation with German labor offices, social insurance agencies, labor unions, organizations of refugees and expellees; and that international support be given to democratic forces in Germany rather than to the non-democratic elements which now strive to monopolize the media of communication, the school system, and the presentation of public opinion.

Pro-democratic groups in Germany most certainly are not free of faults, and may suffer even from basic ones. But it is childish to expect them to be paragons of virtue and it is folly to ignore their existence and to fail to help them to the limit, just because a thoroughly and reliably democratic Germany did not come into existence under military rule.

To neglect them now can only have one result: to encourage and arm the enemies of all democratic society, both within Germany and outside her borders.

WHAT KIND OF LIBERAL ARE YOU?

A Classification of the Species

ROBERT BENDINER

OUT of some 140,000,000 people in the United States, at least 139,500,000 are liberals, to hear them tell it, *liberal* having become a rough synonym for *virtuous, decent, humane, and kind to animals*. Rare is the citizen who can bring himself to say, "Sure I'm a conservative. What of it?" And any American would sooner drop dead than proclaim himself a reactionary. This being so, it occurs to me that perhaps a job of cataloguing is in order; that just as Lamarck made an invaluable contribution to science by breaking down the lower animal kingdom into Infusoria, Annelida, Crustacea, etc., so a classification of the liberal kingdom might be a similarly useful service.

The range in this branch of political life is extremely broad, running from primitive forms still to be found in the Republican party to the grossly over-cultivated variety recently flushed at the Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace at the Waldorf. For the purposes of science, we might first divide the Genus *Liberal* into two major species—the *Anachronistic* and the *Contemporary*. Within each of these large groupings

It is by now an open secret that in American politics the word "liberal" has come to describe birds of amazingly different feathers. ROBERT BENDINER, in an effort to bring some order into chaos, offers here a preliminary classification of the various species contained within the genus "liberal," as he has observed them in the political treetops of this country's landscape. Mr. Bendiner is an associate editor of the *Nation*, and he has also contributed to *Tomorrow*, *American Mercury*, and a number of other periodicals; his article "Civil Liberties and the Communists" was published in the May 1948 COMMENTARY. Mr. Bendiner was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1909, and studied at the College of the City of New York.

will be found a number of varieties, but it should be understood that here, as elsewhere in biology, cross-breeding has produced mixtures, so that some of the categories overlap. Thus many individuals will be found to belong to several species, or at least to combine the traits of several species. For the sake of simplicity, however, we will concern ourselves here only with the broad types, leaving it to the reader to place himself and his friends in one or more of the following categories:

I. Species Anachronistica

IN GENERAL it may be said that all members of this species show an innocent unawareness of the passage of time and the changes of circumstance. They either do not know or will not believe that while the nature of liberalism may remain constant, its program and its immediate objectives must change with the flow of political tides. They may earnestly believe, along with others, that the aim of liberalism is to assure to each member of society the greatest degree of freedom and welfare compatible with the welfare and freedom of others; but what they do not appear to see is that the point of balance does not remain at one spot. It shifts with every major shift of political and economic power. This myopia leaves them habitually and earnestly training their sights on the wrong target, as the following varieties of the species will indicate:

(A) *Laissez Faire Liberals*

These are the descendants of the business liberals of the 18th and 19th centuries, the men who broke the last vestiges of power of a feudal aristocracy and in so doing released energy enough to give the world steam engines, electric power, air travel, and radio;

also monopoly, unemployment, atomic bombs, and Nature's spelled backwards. When the laissez faire they fought for was finally theirs, they used it to become Robber Barons in their own right, thus making themselves the logical target of the liberalism that succeeded theirs. Yet they continue to this day to speak of themselves as the only true liberals, as Jeffersonian Democrats, believers in the doctrine that the best government is the one that governs least. Actually they know that laissez faire is as dead as King George III and they have for generations made use of government for their own purposes. The protective tariff was their invention, they will take a subsidy at the drop of a preferred stock, and government interference to curb the power of trade unions is among the most sacred articles of their faith.

(B) *Western Mavericks*

Probably the earliest ancestor of this group, classified by Senator Moses back in the 20's as "Sons of the Wild Jackass," was the Jacksonian Democrat, full of homespun scorn for the effete East and especially the bankers thereof. The immediate progenitor, or Wild Jackass himself, was the Wild Money Westerner of Free Silver days. Known also as the Greenbacker and the Bryan Democrat, he was characterized by a deep, inherited, and well-founded suspicion of Eastern capital, absentee exploiters of the West, and the railroad plunderbund—all passing under the generic name of "Wall Street." The Western followers of TR's Square Deal formed a branch of the same family, though crossed with the Muckrakers of the East, now extinct as a group.

With the West gradually turning up its quota of native exploiters, some of the substance of the anti-Wall Street sentiment has disappeared, but a healthy shadow remains and is good for soap-box purposes to this day. In part, however, the target of the Westerners has long since shifted across the Atlantic to Europe in general and England in particular. The great isolationists of World War II were all Westerners—the LaFollettes,

Wheeler, Nye, Lindbergh, et al. (An interesting mutation is the McCormick Anglophobe.) In the sphere of economics the wild money doctrines of the fathers have become in the sons those crackpot panaceas that spring up intermittently west of the Mississippi—Ham 'n Eggs, Epic, \$50 Every Thursday, and, by slight geographical extension, Every Man a King. Occasionally grandsons of the Wild Jackass bob up on Capitol Hill; but for the most part these bear the same relationship to their progenitor as the Komodo lizard bears to the brontosaurus.

(C) *1920 Liberals*

This is a dwindling group characterized by an overly developed conviction that history repeats itself. The sub-species shows on all occasions a fierce determination to fight the battles of thirty years ago. Because World War I was followed by the happy overthrow of the Czars, by depression in America, by a ruthless hounding of liberals and trade unionists, and by Warren G. Harding, they take it as a matter of course that after World War II we must again look to Russia as a liberating force, accept the certainty of a crash here at home, see the ghost of A. Mitchell Palmer at the shoulder of ex-Attorney General Clark, and cast Harry Truman in the role of Harding, the weak captive of designing and evil men.

To this species of liberal a revived Germany is the greatest menace of the future and Western imperialism the real source of coming conflict. In truth, the sly attempts to revive German cartels, the fatuous efforts to measure everyone's "loyalty," and the come-down from Roosevelt to Truman have given the *1920 Liberals* something to feed on. But their continued survival depends even more on selective blinders which prevent their noticing certain rather extensive changes in the configuration of world politics. They seem only dimly aware of a difference between the hard-pressed Bolsheviks of John Reed's exciting *Ten Days* and the Russian colossus which has since then imposed on a great part of the globe the blessings of secret police, concentration camps, intellectual regimenta-

tion, and other standard horrors of the totalitarian state. Nor can this variety of liberal quite perceive that the Britain of Kipling and Cecil Rhodes has given way to the Britain of Attlee and Harold Laski, under which, in spite of Mr. Bevin's Palestinian aberrations, "dominion over palm and pine" has faded into a genteel fraternity, with palm and pine occasionally bowing to the King out of common politeness. Above all, the 1920 *Liberal* seems to have no idea of the extent to which the nations of the West have been willing to go in proposing to yield up their precious sovereignties, only to be rebuffed by a Russian nationalism more jingo than any since the Kaiser's.

II. Species Contemporaria

IT MAY be assumed that a few of the varieties of this species share with the *Anachronists* a narrowness of vision which will in time doom them to the same semi-extinction. But right now at least they are in tune with the times, and their targets are real, though in some cases over-selective. They may be divided into varieties, or sub-species, as follows:

(A) *Deal Democrats, New and Fair*

These are the shrewd, intuitive members of the Genus *Liberal*, longer on action than on reason. Observers report watching them for years on end without seeing so much as a sign of a theory or an ideology. Their instincts are soundly liberal, however, and they get by very well on ideas borrowed from other varieties of the species. Indeed, without the *Dealers*, their more intellectual cousins would tax their brains in vain, for these are the doers, the politicians, of the species. Fortunately, members of this group team up with, and to some extent overlap with, the next variety to be considered.

(B) *The Non-Communist Left*

Members of this group, to the general confusion, are also known as *Right-wing Liberals*, a misleading bit of nomenclature originating in circles friendlier to the Communists and therefore inclined to appropriate for their own use any suggestion of "leftness."

It is this group, composed of intellectuals, ex-Socialists, and the more politically developed leaders of labor, that supply the *Dealers* with ideological guidance, keep them from straying too far down the paths of expediency, pepper them with telegrams, and, of late, run their election campaigns. In this thriving category are to be found the committees, the leagues, the unions, the letter-head aggregations, and all other associations of liberals who will have no truck with the Communists—the big trade-union political organizations, Americans for Democratic Action, the Liberal party, etc. In general they hanker after a more militant program of social change than the *Dealers* but a less doctrinaire world than the Socialists. Theirs is the dream of the mixed economy, with freedom hedged about by the requirements of security and vice versa. So healthy is their hatred of the totalitarian cure-all that they will neither wink at fascist methods for curbing the Communists nor suffer Communist aid in their running battle with reaction, thus securing to themselves hearty curses from both sides and a fine spiritual glow.

(C) *Fronters* (known variously as *Fellow-Travelers*, *Totalitarian Liberals*, *Stalinoid Liberals*, *Innocents*, and, in China, *Agrarian Reformers*)

Of this sub-species, which in its entirety the stricter political zoologists refuse to include in the genus, there are two varieties—the knowing frauds, i.e., Communists who for tactical reasons abjure the party card, and those who, while making every twist and turn of the party line, do so in the unbelievable conviction that such conduct is the requisite of honest liberalism. Of the former, nothing need be said here, since they must obviously be ruled out of the genus by definition. The latter are characterized by the following stigmata: a violent belief that Russia can do no wrong, and that when it palpably *does* wrong, it has been driven to do so in order to defend itself against the evil machinations of the West; the ignorant conviction that Communism is a form of liberalism, indeed its most advanced form; and the curious

superstition that to criticize the comrades, even when their conduct is indefensible, is a violation of the liberal franchise, a threat to the very safety of all liberals, and an outrage to the spirit of Jefferson, Lincoln, and Franklin D. Roosevelt. Members of this group shun basic ideological discussion, preferring to deal only with surface phenomena, and preface their political remarks with "Of course, I'm not a Communist, *but* . . ." They are more zealous, if possible, than the Communists themselves in defending the "line," atoning thereby for the failure of nerve which prevents their accepting full initiation into the lodge.

These anomalous political creatures, in reality neither Communists nor liberals, are capable of the most fabulous applications of the double-standard. Compulsory military training in the Soviet Union, with one soldier for every fifty-one civilians, plus torrents of propaganda on the glories of Russian arms going back to Ivan the Terrible, constitute peaceful self-defense and decent national pride. The United States—with one man under arms for every two hundred and nine civilians, with its major weapon in civilian hands in spite of the howls of the generals, and a public suspicion of the brass that amounts to a national tradition—is held by these same individuals to be the fountainhead of militarism and the source of the world's saber-rattling. The vulgar inanities of the Un-American Affairs Committee are vastly, and rightly, deplored, but not so the literally lethal activities of the MVD; the loyalty program of the Justice Department outrages them to their toes, but the bloody Russian purges of the 30's were merely an example of proper judicial firmness. A Tammany wardheeler, stuffing ballot-boxes, lays bare the whole vast hypocrisy of parliamentary elections, but where 99.7 per cent of the voters, all carefully screened, mark "yes" beside the single slate that appears on the ballot, a higher level of democracy is believed to have been attained.

(D) *Specialists*

This is a category minor in ideological sig-

nificance but clearly one to be reckoned with in numbers. It includes all those special-interest individuals whose liberalism flames up where their own pet causes are affected, only to simmer down to an indifferent ember when the next fellow's interest is at stake. I include here those hyper-sensitive racial spokesmen who fail to see that the safety of their own minority lies in the safety of all minorities. There are those Catholics who never cease their righteous assaults on the curtailment of Catholic religious liberty behind the Iron Curtain while utterly indifferent to the fact that in Franco Spain a publicly held Protestant church service is as illegal as a Communist rally. In this group, too, are those Jews who properly protest Catholic attempts at censorship only to turn around and demand that the *Merchant of Venice* and *Ivanhoe* be removed from school libraries and that movie theaters steer clear of *Oliver Twist*.

In this same sub-species we find those labor leaders who enlist the aid of liberalism in fighting the battle of trade-unionism in the courts and legislatures, but who enforce racial segregation in their own organizations, who make a Congressman's position on the Taft-Hartley Act a criterion on Election Day, but can't be bothered about how he stood on the President's Civil Rights Program.

IN COMPLETING this classification, I find there are a few types of liberals still left who fit into no particular species, or who perhaps fit into several of them, but who nonetheless have certain marked traits that tend to set them apart. These traits are largely temperamental, but since they bulk large in the pattern, they should at least be mentioned in passing. I have in mind the following: (1) The *Automatic Liberal*. This is the one whose mind was long ago fixed into a rigid pattern, out of which judgments emerge with a mechanical determination that completely obviates the need of thought. Responses are wholly automatic, thus: Russia, good; Britain, imperialistic; labor, right; business, wrong; press, kept; South, rotten, etc. (2) The *Personal Liberal*, who doesn't be-

lieve in action of any sort; he doesn't have to because he "lives" his liberalism. By means of this rationalization an extremely comfortable way of life can be worked out without undue burden on the conscience. It is members of this group whose "best friends are Jews" and who see no sense in an FEPC because they get along fine with the colored maid. (3) The *Southern Liberal*. He is indistinguishable from his Northern counterpart on all issues but one and may belong to several of the classified groups. What sets him apart is the single, solemn conviction that the South should be left to work out its racial problem in its own way and in its own good time, whether that course means justice for the Negro now, in fifty years, or a hundred and fifty. (4) The *Hyperthyroid*.

This industrious creature not only shares the hair-trigger reactions of the *Automatic Liberal*, but spends his life in a constant chase for proofs of their validity. He goes gumshoeing around, magnifying glass in hand, examining the tracks of his fellows for signs of skullduggery, prejudice, and general conspiracy against the downtrodden. For the *Hyperthyroid* all property-owners and office-holders are suspect, and a restaurant that fails to serve matzoh balls in season is probably anti-Semitic. He is often useful, but hard to live with.

(Readers who discover other species of the Genus *Liberal* are asked to add their findings to the compilation, to the end that greater clarity may be introduced into this relatively unsystematized area of political science.)

MONUMENTS

EARL HENDLER

THROUGH my pained eyes there float the flickering lights
 of dark, gray parks wherein the statues soar
 and labor, man and horse, to sculptured heights.
 There, cannons' mouths, wide open in a roar,
 command a green and consecrated soil;
 and statesmen's platitudes dug into stone
 commemorate some old thief's civic toil.

Only the church bell, rattling like a bone
 flung down from high, still offers those an alm
 who seek the sanctuary of the bench
 and sit revering nothing in their calm
 but bread, and thirst that drinking fountains quench;
 these sources stand, the poor's emoluments,
 crouching and low, these dull, dark monuments.

EARL HENDLER, who was born in Newark, New Jersey in 1917, has published poetry in a number of literary magazines. At present he is teaching in the Newark school system. Mr. Hendler's poem "Today's the Day" appeared in the April 1949 COMMENTARY.

THE CURIOUS HISTORY OF THE SIX-POINTED STAR

How the "Magen David" Became the Jewish Symbol

GERSHOM SCHOLEM

THE six-pointed star known as the Magen David or Shield of David, which is now emblazoned on the flag of the State of Israel, is from every point of view a cause for astonishment. Where did the symbol originate, and what is its true meaning? In the scholarly literature, as well as the popular, truth and fantasy are mingled. Writers on the subject confuse the authentic tradition of the symbol, which they do not understand very well, with their own speculations, some of which are very far-fetched indeed: in sum, each man interprets the Magen David as he pleases.

One commentator says: this is the symbol of Judaism, of the religious and intellectual universe of monotheism. Another says: it is the pure symbol of the Jewish national community. Some say: it is the symbol of the wars of the Kings of the House of David, while still others say: it is the symbol of

eternal harmony and peace, the unification of opposites and their subordination to the principle of unity. What is common to all these interpretations is that their daring is matched only by their ineptness.

The Shield of David is indeed a wondrous symbol, stimulating the intellect and arousing the passion for speculation. And whose heart is not stirred to illuminate the dark depths, each man according to the latest encyclopedia at his disposal? Blessed be He Who succors the poor, Who has shown us wonders by His grace, and has not locked the gates of pious homiletics.

WHAT is the true history of this Shield of David in the Jewish tradition?

Does it have its roots in the Jewish tradition at all? Has it always been accepted among wide or narrow circles as the symbol of Judaism, or at least as a specifically Jewish symbol? And if not, when did it begin to serve this function, and through what causes? In trying to answer these questions, a distinction must be made between the appearance of the emblem itself—the two crossed triangles in the shape of a six-pointed star—and the history of the name, "Shield of David," by which it is now known; for the name and the symbol were not originally linked together.

Actually the six-pointed star is not a Jewish symbol; *a fortiori* it could not be "the symbol of Judaism." It has none of the criteria that mark the nature and development of the true symbol. It does not express any "idea," it does not arouse ancient associations rooted in our experiences, and it is not a shorthand representation of an entire spiritual reality, understood immediately by the observer. It does not remind us of anything in Biblical or in rabbinic Judaism. Indeed,

THE six-pointed Shield of David, now inscribed on the flag of Israel, is universally accepted as the Jewish symbol par excellence; and it is commonly assumed that the Magen David's special significance reaches back to remote antiquity, and enshrines some deep, traditionally hallowed, religious or historical meaning. GERSHOM SCHOLEM, one of the great Jewish scholars of our time, here traces the obscure story of the Magen David through its long and curious career, and reveals that the true story of the symbol is quite different from that asserted by most accepted "authorities." Professor Scholem was born in Germany in 1897 and studied at the universities of Berlin, Jena, Bern, and Munich. He left Germany for Palestine in 1923, and in 1927 became Professor of Jewish Mysticism at the Hebrew University. He recently completed a lecture tour in this country. His book *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, which was published by Schocken Books in 1941, is considered a classic in its field. This article was translated from the Hebrew by Milton Himmelfarb.

until the middle of the 19th century, it did not occur to any scholar or Cabalist to inquire into the secret of its Jewish meaning, and it is not mentioned in the books of the devout or in all of Hasidic literature. If it was once related to the emotions of the devout Jew, that relation was entirely founded on a sentiment of fear.

The two-triangle star is to be found among many peoples, both as decoration and as a magical sign, although it seems to be younger than its companion, the pentagram or five-pointed star. Its occasional appearance as a decoration gives it no claim to be a "Jewish" symbol; and even as a simple decoration it is only rarely found among our antiquities. It appears among the motifs that served to decorate ancient buildings, including the synagogue of Capernaum (2nd or 3rd century CE), but in the same synagogue the swastika is found side by side with it, and certainly no one will contend that this makes the swastika a Jewish symbol. The six-pointed star has been discovered on an ancient Hebrew (or Phoenician) seal, but together with other signs and figures, none of which can be considered a Jewish religious symbol. It is not to be found at all in medieval synagogues or on medieval ceremonial objects, although it has been found in quite a number of medieval Christian churches—again, not as a Christian symbol but only as a decorative motif. The appearance of the symbol in Christian churches long before its appearance in our synagogues should warn the overzealous interpreters. We can easily understand Jacob Reifman, one of the great scholars of the Enlightenment, who seventy-five years ago cried out against the Shield of David as "slips of a stranger" in Israel's vineyard," recalling the verse: "They mingled themselves with the nations and learned their works."

EVEN on ancient tombstones the six-pointed star is not to be found before the 17th century, and then only in Prague. An exception is one tombstone in Taranto, in the South of Italy, on which is engraved the six-pointed star near the name of the departed,

"Leon son of David"; the figure is placed just before "David," but we cannot say whether this is more than a mere coincidence. It is assumed that the tombstone in question does not date from later than the 6th century. This symbol does not appear again on any other tombstone of that period, but the five-pointed star, the pentagram (which competes with the six-pointed star in the Practical Cabala too), is found on another contemporary tombstone, from Spain. The suggestion advanced by the late *hacham*, Moses Gaster, that Rabbi Akiba introduced the six-pointed star as a messianic symbol in Bar Kochba's war, is entirely baseless.

And as it is with R. Akiba, so is it with the 13th-century author of the *Book of Splendor* ("Zohar") and with the 16th century Cabalist, R. Isaac Luria ("the Ari"). There is no reference at all to the Shield of David in their works, let alone as a symbol of Judaism. In all the vast literature commonly known as the Lurianic writings, the figure of the Shield, but not its name, is found only once, in the context of talismans and amulets; even here, there is some doubt whether the entire chapter may not be a later addition, since it is missing from many versions.

Nevertheless the common Jewish textbooks are full of nonsense about the presumed origin of the general use of the Shield of David in the Lurianic Cabala. According to this "theory," the diffusion of the symbol occurred in the 16th century. One author has written (and many have quoted him): "This international symbol was diffused as a peculiarly Jewish symbol only by R. Isaac Luria, who saw in it the image of the Primal Man and the world of Emanations." Someone else has added that "the meaning of the Shield of David, as it was expounded in the *Book of Splendor* [which knows absolutely nothing of it!], had a very strong influence on the powerful imagination of R. Isaac Luria, who saw in this image a wonderful representation of his vision of the world." Things like these are copied from one book to another, and it is astonishing that no one has thought it advisable to look into the Lurianic writings themselves and try to find the sym-

bol and an explanation for it. He would discover that the idea that Luria gave the stimulus for the diffusion of the Shield of David as the symbol of Judaism is a figment of the imagination.

IT MAY be asked: How did it happen that these scholars confused their own interpretations with those of Luria? The answer is clear, simple, and slightly comical.

These scholars write that Luria, in his *Tree of Life*, rules that at the Passover Seder we must arrange the plate in such a fashion that its various components should form a six-pointed star: one triangle being composed of the shankbone (*zro'a*), egg, and bitter herb, and the other of the horseradish, parsley, and *harosset*. The fact of the matter is that the Lurianic writings say something entirely different about the arrangement of the Seder plate, and there is not the slightest reference to the Shield of David: "And as for the priest, thou shalt put to thy right the *zro'a*, representing the Emanation of Grace; and opposite it, to the left, the egg, representing Might; and between and under them the bitter herb, representing Glory. And the *harosset* shall be put beneath the *zro'a*, representing Everlastingness; and opposite it, under the egg, the parsley, representing Majesty; and the horseradish, which is later eaten between two *matzot*, under the bitter herb, representing Foundation." We see, therefore, that these six elements of the Seder are to be arranged on the plate to represent the six Cabalistic Emanations, in the form of two triangles, one under the other, and not crossed over each other; this arrangement does not even suggest the Shield of David.

But in the 19th century, when the six-pointed star began to be widely represented on nearly every religious object, "artistic" seder plates began to be made according to the modern taste, and the arrangement set down by Luria (and mentioned also in any number of Haggadas) was arbitrarily converted to the form of a six-pointed star. On older seder plates, especially those dating from the 18th century, there are entirely different decorative elements (the twelve signs

of the Zodiac, the twelve tribes, etc.). The confused historians of the Shield of David associated the Lurianic teachings with the modern seder-plate design that began to be so popular in the 19th century; they concluded without further inquiry that both the arrangement and the form of the sign itself were to be attributed to the Lurianic Cabala.

Some modern scholars have even used the writings of 18th-century Christian alchemists and occultists to "reveal" the Shield of David as a symbol of harmony and peace. But there is absolutely no relation, in this matter, between these sources and the Cabalists, or any other Jewish religious group. The Shield of David has neither a Jewish religious "genealogy" nor a Jewish religious significance, either exoterically or esoterically; and it certainly had no place in the mystical world of the devout men of Israel.

THE true history of the six-pointed star and its ascent to the rank of a symbol in Israel is bound up with what is called Practical Cabala, which is nothing more than Jewish magic, whose links with the theoretical doctrines of the Cabalists were always weak. Particularly, it is bound up with the use of amulets and talismans.

In this area a strong reciprocal influence was at work between the Jews and Gentiles, for nothing is more international than magic. Magic signs and designs pass from one people to another, just as "sacred" (i.e., incomprehensible) combinations of "names" wander back and forth, and frequently become corrupted in their wanderings. In general, magic signs like these were called "seals" in our literature, not only because they were frequently engraved on rings—the production of magical rings of this kind was a well defined trade, and we have textbooks in this science—but also because of the common attitude that a man "seals himself" with these signs and protects himself against the assaults of evil spirits.

Two designs, both endowed with magical meaning and power, are frequently interchanged in the literature on talismans: the six-pointed star and the five-pointed star. In

practice, the transition from one to the other was very easy, and the investigator of amulets will frequently find that where one uses the five-pointed star, another uses the six-pointed star. In the beginning these designs had no special names or terms, and it is only in the Middle Ages that definite names began to be given to some of those most widely used. There is very little doubt that terms like these first became popular among the Arabs, who showed a tremendous interest in all the occult sciences, arranging and ordering them systematically long before the Practical Cabalists thought of doing so.

It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that for a long time both the five-pointed and the six-pointed stars were called by one name, the "Seal of Solomon," and that no distinction was made between them. This name is obviously related to the Jewish legend of Solomon's dominion over the spirits, and of his ring with the Ineffable Name engraved on it. These legends expanded and proliferated in a marked fashion during the Middle Ages, among Jews and Arabs alike, but the name, "Seal of Solomon," apparently originated with the Arabs. This term they did not apply to any one design exclusively; they applied it to an entire series of seven seals to which they attributed extreme potency in putting to flight the forces of the Demon.

When the amulet of the seven seals was adopted by the Jews, its name was changed and other names were given to it ("the seven signs of Rab Huna," and the like). "Seal of Solomon" was applied by Jews only to the five- and six-pointed stars. This became the usage among Christians as well, at least from approximately the 13th century. The medieval Cabalist, R. Abraham Abulafia, compares the shape of the *segol* (a triangularly pointed Hebrew vowel sign) to "the sign of half the Seal of King Solomon," and the term is frequent in the Hebrew literature on amulets.

THE virtue of this seal as a talisman was always to accomplish one thing and one thing alone: to serve as a shield against the evil spirits. Consequently we find it in many of the magical versions of the *mezuzah*,

which were so widespread from the beginning of the Middle Ages till about the 14th century. *Mezuzot* and amulets served an identical function for the adepts of magic. A German rabbi of the 12th century writes about the *mezuzah* that "it is a common practice, for the additional safety of the house, to inscribe seals and angelic names at the end of the *mezuzah* verses; and this is neither forbidden nor commanded, but only for additional safety." Some of the early rabbis actually ruled that the *mezuzah* "must be written" in magical style and with the additions. Maimonides denounced the extremists who went so far as to inscribe the names and seals not only in the margins and between the verses of the text comprising the *mezuzah*, but even between the lines within each group of verses; in his opinion, such men are "in the category of those who have no share in the world to come; for these fools were not content to nullify a commandment, but they took the great commandment of the unity of the Name, and His love and worship, and used it as though it were an amulet for their own profit." The seals in most of the versions of these magical *mezuzot*—of which some have come down to us—are nothing more than representations of the Shield of David (sometimes as many as twelve in one *mezuzah*; the late collector Elkan Adler once showed me such a one).

It was not, therefore, as a symbol of the monotheistic faith that the six-pointed star began its Jewish career, but as a magical talisman for protection against the evil spirits; and this remained its primary meaning among the masses of the people until about a hundred years ago. The magical *mezuzah* originated, without any doubt, in Babylonia or Palestine in the gaonic period (7th to 11th centuries CE, roughly), but we do not have enough evidence today to decide from which of these two countries it comes. In the medieval literary sources that describe the method of preparing the magical *mezuzah*, we find no mention of the name of the seal, whether "Seal of Solomon" or "Shield of David." In articles and textbooks we read the erroneous hypothesis to the effect that

the Karaite scholar Judah Hadassi, in the middle of the 12th century, was the first to call this sign the Shield of David (in his book, *The Cluster of Camphor*); actually, this was only an addition by the 19th-century printer.

In the course of the years the magical *mezuzah* was forgotten, but the two forms of the "Seal of Solomon" are preserved in the magical literature of all three religions. Any one who looks into the Renaissance books on magical practices, like *Solomon's Key* or the literature ascribed to the legendary magician Dr. Faustus, will find them used in many connections. Though the magical *mezuzah* went out of use after the Middle Ages, the figures served as a talisman in other amulets, some of which attained great popularity—like the famous amulet for putting out fires, on which was written the verse—"And the people cried unto Moses; and Moses prayed unto the Lord, and the fire abated"—around the Shield of David, in the center of which was written the formula AGLA, the initial Hebrew letters of the verse "Thou art mighty forever, O Lord."

WHERE does this title, the "Shield of David," come from, and what does it mean? It is known that among the medieval mystics some legends were current about King David's shield and its magical powers. The earliest source is the *Book of Desire*, which is an interpretation of the seventy magical names of Metatron, Prince of the Divine Presence. The book was composed in Germany in the 13th century, in the circle of the German Hasidim, by Eleazar of Worms or one of his disciples. In it we read how King David had a golden shield, upon which was engraved the Great Name of seventy-two names (a combination of holy names by whose virtue, the Midrash tells us, Israel was redeemed from Egypt); and beneath was engraved the "name" of Taph-tephajah, one of the names of the Prince of the Presence. "And when a man is at war and his enemies attack him, let him remember it and he will be saved," for the same book tells us that the numerical value of the

Hebrew letters of Taphtephajah is the same as that of the letters of "upon the shield."

As early as the 13th century, the design of the Seal of Solomon, already found in magical *mezuzot*, was substituted for the Great Name of seventy-two names. Why this substitution occurred, I do not know, although it is possible that the seventy-two names had been written out in an arrangement like the shape of the Seal of Solomon and that afterwards, as the writing of the names became stylized, lines finally took the place of the names. In the 17th century, in certain instances, we find instructions that the Shield of David is not to be drawn in simple lines, but is to be composed of certain holy names and combinations of names.

In any event, we may say with certainty that from some such legend as this or from statements similar to that which I have quoted, the term, "Shield of David," was developed. This is clearly proved by the place in which its first appearance is known to us. In the early years of the 14th century there was composed in Spain the *Book of the Boundary*, by David ben Judah the Pious, a grandson of Nachmanides. In this book, which has been preserved only in manuscript, we twice find the design of the two crossed triangles, both times called the Shield of David, once the "Macrocosmic Shield of David" and once the "Microcosmic Shield of David." Beneath the pictures of the Shield is written the "name," Taphtephajah, which proves its intimate connection with the tradition concerning King David's Shield in the *Book of Desire*. In some of the manuscripts I have examined, the design has become corrupted and has been replaced by a single triangle or by the five-pointed star; but in a number of old manuscript compendia of the Practical Cabala, we find protective amulets with the picture of the Shield of David, and at its center or by its side the same name, Taphtephajah. One of these is the book entitled *The Roots of the Names*, by R. Moses Zakutt, a famous encyclopedia of the Practical Cabala, dating from the 17th century.

An altogether different tradition concerning the emblem on King David's shield exists

from the 15th century on. It was first mentioned in *The Sacrifice of Isaac*, by the noted Spanish preacher, R. Isaac Arama, and it taught that the emblem on King David's shield was not the image that we know by this name, but Psalm 67* in the shape of the menorah, the seven-branched candelabrum. The menorah pictured on the Shield of David—here is a most curious combination of the two motifs. This tradition knows nothing of the Magen David, in our sense. It must be admitted that the menorah would seem to have a better right to serve as the symbol of Judaism than the Shield of David, in its present accepted form.

The writing of Psalm 67 in the shape of the menorah became very widespread after the 15th century. It was the custom to read this psalm during the seven weeks between Passover and *Shavuot*, and in all the special prayer books for this period it was so written. Hence arose the custom of using this image in synagogues and other places, and the Cabalists gave its talismanic virtue unlimited praise. At the end of a booklet entitled *The Golden Menorah*, printed in Prague in the 16th century, we read: "This psalm, together with the menorah, is an allusion to great things. . . . And King David used to bear this psalm inscribed, pictured, and engraved on his shield, on a sheet of gold, in the shape of the menorah, when he went forth to battle, and he would meditate on its mystery, and conquer"; and similarly in many other books.

It would seem, however, that the talismanic power of the star representation of the Shield of David was more "tried and true," so that it has won out over its representation in the form of the menorah even on the modern battlefield of Jewish symbolism.

UNTIL the 17th century, the two terms, Shield of David and Seal of Solomon, are used indiscriminately, but slowly (perhaps under the influence of Christian usage) the second term becomes applicable only to the five-pointed star. It was at the beginning

of the 18th century that the term "Shield of David" assumed the fixed meaning it bears today. The Christians began to use this term, and we have a number of booklets from that period, in Latin and German, containing explanations of the Star of David and allegorical sermons on it, in the spirit of the alchemists. Homilies like these were entirely foreign to the spirit of the Jewish preachers of that generation. Nonetheless, even among them there was one who began to interpret it as the symbol of the Kingdom of the House of David. Abraham Hayyim ha-Cohen, of Nikolsburg, wrote in his commentary on Psalms, which was first printed in 1750: "For there was a difference between the shields of the kings of Israel and those of the Kingdom of the House of David, in that the kings of Israel had a shield with three sides [i.e., triangular] to show that the House of David had a valid claim to the quality of kingship." We have here, then, an interpretation of the symbol, not as a talisman, but as representing kingship—the Emanation of Kingship, which is the Congregation of Israel above and the Kingdom of the House of David below.

Indeed, we find a similar interpretation again in a very striking context, in which the magical career of the Shield of David reached its zenith. Here the symbol casts off its swaddling clothes of magic to rise to the vision of approaching redemption as proclaimed by the "false Messiah" of the 17th century, Sabbatai Zevi. This critical turning point is concealed in the celebrated amulets of R. Jonathan Eybeschutz. All his amulets include the Shield of David (the only image to be found in them), in which are inscribed formulas like "Seal" alone, or "Seal of MBD," or "Seal of MBID," or even "Seal of the God of Israel." In his defense of these amulets, R. Jonathan took refuge behind the magical meaning of the image, and he denied any symbolic value to this sign from a Jewish point of view. It was not so with those who sought to decipher his amulets. They explained his predilection for this image by its Sabbatian significance: their interpretation was that for R. Jonathan the

*"God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us. . . ."

Shield of David had become a messianic symbol. They compared the inscriptions within the images in many of his amulets, and they discovered in them a Sabbatian reference: MBD stood for Messiah ben David, and so on. They were certainly not arbitrary in interpreting the matter in this fashion, though we must not be astonished that R. Jonathan did not admit their charges. We find ourselves before these alternatives: if R. Jonathan was not secretly a Sabbatian, then his amulets have no symbolic meaning at all, and are nothing but magical mumbo-jumbo; if he was a Sabbatian, then we are compelled to admit that the character of the symbol in his amulets is a great innovation, and that R. Jonathan was the first to see in the Shield of David a highly meaningful symbol (although a very "private" and esoteric symbol) of a mystic vision of redemption. This was not only the Shield of David, but the Shield of the Son of David as well!

We must confess that all this is enormously stimulating to us of this generation: the modern interpretation of the Shield of David as the symbol of redemption, which even determined the name of Franz Rosenzweig's profound book, *The Star of Redemption* (*Der Stern der Erloesung*), actually first emerged from the Sabbatian prattlings of messianic redemption which was mystically alluded to in the combinations of letters in amulets! It is greatly to be doubted whether the fathers of Zionism, when they accepted the Shield of David as the symbol of the movement for the revival of Israel, knew that perhaps in this respect also they were in tune with the secret thought of the greatest among the Sabbatian believers.

ENTIRELY different from the first, magical, root, is the second root from which the general and broader use of the Shield of David grew; that is, its official use in the seals of several Jewish communities. The "official" use of the Shield of David began in Prague and spread out from that city, in the 17th and 18th centuries, through Moravia and Austria. We do not know whether the Jews freely chose this emblem for the sign on

their "flags," or whether it was thrust upon them by the Christian authorities. But even though it may have come about through compulsion and the orders of superiors, constraint became custom, and the sign came to be cherished by the Jews of Bohemia and Moravia.

In surviving notes on the contents of ancient documents concerning the Jewish community of Prague, which were destroyed by fire more than two centuries ago, it is said that the Emperor Charles IV in 1354 gave the Jews the "freedom" (privilege) "to bear a flag" as a special token of his grace to the Jews of the city. This is no mere legend, since we later find the flag mentioned in the chronicles of Prague Jewry as a well known thing. In 1527 the authorities ordered the Jews of Prague to greet Emperor Ferdinand I, on his entry into the city, "with their flag." On this flag was a large Shield of David (not in the form of a five-pointed star, as some books would have it). If in that early period the Jews of Prague already saw in this symbol King David's shield, according to the tradition of the German Hasidim that I have cited, we must suppose that they chose it themselves and bore it proudly on their banner. If, on the other hand, the authorities chose it for the Jews, we cannot say whether this was because of its widespread magical use or because of its decorative quality. In the light of the unbroken tradition of this symbol among the Jews of Prague, however, there is cause for the belief that this was a deliberately chosen symbol of Jewish pride and a memento, as it were, of the days of old. The original flag was not preserved, but a new one was made in the days of Emperor Ferdinand, and when it was damaged in the course of the years, still another was made in 1716, which is kept to this very day in the Altneuschul synagogue. Apparently the authorities of the state had no less respect for the flag than the Jews, since in 1716 they fined the elders of the community for not taking proper care of it and allowing it to be damaged!

In contradiction, we have the testimony of Hungarian historians that on the flag with

which the Jews of Ofen greeted King Matthias of Hungary in 1476 there were two five-pointed stars, but not the six-pointed Shield of David. Here certainly was no recognition of the unique quality of the six-pointed Shield of David as a representation of the Congregation of Israel before the world.

Even until the beginning of the 17th century, the two stars were still vying with each other in Prague, though by this time the use of the term, "Shield of David," had become current among the Jews of Prague. When the emperor, in 1622, granted a coat-of-arms to Jacob Bassevi, alias von Treuenfeld, the first Jew in Prague and all the Empire to be ennobled, his escutcheon bore three five-pointed stars, one beneath the other in a diagonal line, for the apparent purpose of serving as a clue to his Jewishness. On the other hand, on the tombstone of the historian David Gans, who died in 1613, there is a six-pointed Shield of David, just as his last book, published a year before his death, is called by this name. From the old banner, the six-pointed star seems to have been taken over into the seal of the Jewish community. We find it as the main ornament on the title page of the first Hebrew book printed in Prague, on Hannukah in 1512; in another book printed in Prague in 1522, it is found together with the city's coat of arms, thereby indicating its quasi-official status. When, in 1627, Emperor Ferdinand II approved again the old seal of the Prague community, outside the six sides of the star was spelled out, M-a-G-e-N D-a-V-i-D, with one consonant in each of the six spaces. From then on the six-pointed Shield of David is used communally in a number of different places in Prague: on the seals of societies and individuals, on tombstones, on synagogue structures and the ironwork of the synagogue *bimah*, on the tower of the Jewish council's building.

From Prague this official use of the symbol spread out. In 1655 it is found on the seal of the Viennese community, and in 1690 on the seal of the community of Kremsier, in Moravia. On the wall of the old synagogue of the community of Budweis (Southern

Bohemia), which was abandoned by the Jews in 1641, there are representations of Shields of David alternating with roses; apparently this is the oldest synagogue outside of Prague on which this symbol is to be found. In his youth, R. Jonathan Eybeschuetz might have been able to see it on the seal of the community of Eybeschuetz. A number of communities in Moravia used as a seal the Shield of David alone, with the addition of the name of the community. Others had on their seals a lion holding the Shield of David, like the community of Weiskirchen at the beginning of the 18th century. In very isolated instances the figure of the Shield of David was used in southern Germany also, doubtless under the influence of the Prague community.

In other countries, we do not generally find the Shield of David in use before the beginning of the 19th century, either on community seals, or on the curtains of the Ark, or on Torah mantles. In books printed outside of Prague, it was used as a printer's mark only by the printers of the Foa family, and appears in their books from 1551 to the beginning of the 19th century. Their family coat-of-arms has a palm-tree, among the leaves of which a Shield of David is fixed, grasped by two lions. No other printer used it and it is clear that the emblem had no "Jewish" meaning. Printers who imitated the Foa mark at the beginning of the 18th century omitted the Shield of David and retained only the palm-tree and the two lions.

APPARENTLY the prime motive for the remarkably wide diffusion of the Shield of David in the 19th century was the desire to imitate Christianity: the Jews of the era of Emancipation, seeing the "symbol of Christianity" everywhere, sought a "symbol of Judaism." If Judaism is the "Mosaic religion," why should it not properly have a striking and simple sign of recognition, like the other religions? The new emancipated Jews desired to erect above the walls of the synagogue something resembling the symbol of the cross, and this is what led to the ascendancy of the Shield of David in the 19th cen-

ture, and helped it to become widely used on ceremonial objects as well. It was from the enlightened West that the symbol of Jewishness passed to Poland and Russia.

The use of amulets was still very widespread, especially in the East, and the devout did not trouble themselves with complex thoughts; the mimicry of Christianity inherent in the choice of the symbol was confused with its talismanic and magical properties, to which they had become accustomed—especially the simple folk—from countless amulets. Thenceforth the Shield of David began to be introduced everywhere—on the walls, on the windows and roofs of synagogues, on tombstones and medals—as though it were from Sinai. In their pursuit of a useful symbol and in their impulse toward mimicry, it did not occur to the builders of the new synagogues that intrinsically the symbol did not stand for anything, or for very little, of the world of Judaism, and consequently that it did not have the deep roots, drenched in meaning, of the cross in the religious world of Christianity. As late as 1854, G. Wolf wrote in Vienna that he was very well acquainted with the spirit of the Jews of Moravia, and that the whole of the pious Jew's belief in the Shield of David was that it would protect him against any malevolent assault by his enemies; he did not say that it had a value as a symbol of that pious Jew's Judaism, in the sense that the cross had religious meaning for the Christian.

The upshot of the matter is this: in the very days of its greatest popularity the Shield of David was a meaningless symbol of Judaism; and the Judaism of those days, in turn, tended to be meaningless. It required more than preachers' sermons, however admirable in intent, to breathe life into a symbol. The successful and empty career of the Shield of

David during the 19th century is in some measure a token of the Jewish decadence of that century.

Then the Zionists came, seeking to restore the ancient glories—or more correctly, to change the face of their people. When they chose it as a symbol for Zionism at the Basle Congress of 1897, the Shield of David was possessed of two virtues that met the requirements of men in quest of a symbol: on the one hand, its wide diffusion during the previous century—its appearance on every new synagogue, on the stationery of many charitable organizations, etc.—had made it known to everybody; and on the other, it was not explicitly identified with a *religious* association in the consciousness of their contemporaries. This lack became its virtue. The symbol did not arouse memories of the past: it could be filled with hope for the future.

But even Zionism did not do so much to confer the sacredness of a true symbol on the Shield of David as did that mad dictator who made of it a badge of shame for millions of our people, who compelled them to wear it publicly on their clothing as the badge of exclusion and of eventual extermination. Under this sign they moved along the road of horror and degradation, struggle and heroism. If there be such a thing as a soil that grows meaning for symbols, this is it. Some have said: the sign under which they went to destruction and to the gas chambers deserves to be discarded for a sign that will signify life. But it is also possible to think in the opposite fashion: the sign that in our days was sanctified by suffering and torture has won its right to be the sign that will light up the road of construction and life. "The going down is the prelude to the raising up"; where it was humbled, there will you find it exalted.

THE DREAM LIFE OF THE NEW WOMAN

As Mirrored in Current "Historical" Heroines

DAVID T. BAZELON

THE avowed purpose of our popular culture—the Hollywood film, the current best-selling “historical novels,” the radio soap operas—is to afford its avid consumers a quick momentary satisfaction of their fantasies; and the box-office returns sufficiently attest to their sensational success in their chosen role. By that same token, such “escapist” culture, being wish-fulfilment, should tell us a good deal about the unfulfilled wishes—the dreams, the desires, the aspirations—that currently stir the hearts of the millions, as well as throw light on the hidden ideals and thwarted ambitions in our modern society. For wishes change with the changing conditions of life; our “wish-fulfilments” are not the same as our fathers’ or grandfathers’, except in the most generalized sense: the wishes expressed on the screen, over the radio, in our novels, are the wishes generated by the problems of present-day life, as lived by real people.

The fact that people might wish for other things if they had the power to construct their own wish-fantasies, or if other kinds were presented to them, is beside the point; these are the wishes they accept and act on.

THE enormous success of the popular historical novel, in the *Forever Amber* vein, with their sexually rampaging heroines, is one of the most intriguing facts of American popular culture. Here DAVID T. BAZELON analyzes this genre in terms of what it may signify about the hopes and aspirations of 20th-century women. Mr. Bazelon is a frequent contributor to *COMMENTARY*. His last previous article was “Dashiell Hammett’s ‘Private Eye,’” May 1949. Mr. Bazelon was born in Shreveport, Louisiana in 1923, and has attended Columbia University and the Universities of Illinois, Virginia, and Chicago. In the Fall he will teach a course on popular culture in the English department of Bard College.

And even when it is granted that the consumer of popular culture may to some extent be two people—the one who goes to the movies or listens to the soap operas and the one who leads the rest of his life—still no one can really escape from himself altogether; and indeed the value of escape through fantasy—of “escape” as we know it—would be negligible if the total “loss of oneself” were possible. Fantasies are in essence passive, quick, and easy fulfilments of one’s present self.

THE “historical novel” is a typical product of this popular culture. It has had a long and varied career, giving expression to many different kinds of fantasies. In its modern and popular form the historical novel has been little employed as a genuine instrument for understanding history, which in part was the effort of its founder, Sir Walter Scott, who recreated the medieval world in his novels not only because he preferred it to his own, but also because he wished to fructify the experience of his day with the values of medieval or aristocratic society. Instead, the form in our time has been used as a paper-house of historical facts in which current fantasies could be lodged.

Most recently, beginning with *Gone With the Wind*, a new type of fantasy took up its quarters in the “historical” novel; with *Forever Amber* it had its greatest glorification.

Called in the trade the “breast” novel, because there is usually a very bosomy picture of the heroine on the dust-jacket, the current historical novel is often written by a woman and is always about a woman. The heroine is endowed with unbelievably strong “sex appeal.” (As of the famous Amber: “There was about her a kind of warm luxuriance, something immediately suggestive to

men of pleasurable fulfilment—something for which she was not responsible but of which she was acutely conscious.”) She is very independent-minded; she has a great deal of trouble controlling her turbulent instincts; she is profoundly amoral; and she is “on the make” not only sexually but in her career (of this more later) with what at times amounts to religious frenzy. These heroines go at men and the world with such abandon and with such concentrated self-interest that their activity can only be compared with our great Western Expansion, the rape of the American continent. And, in truth, these Amazons of fiction are engaged in conquering an area which can justly be compared to the virginal American continent, nothing less than what used to be known as “a man’s world.”

Let us take three recent examples* of this new use of the historical novel as a vehicle for the fantasy projections of the “new woman” and—always keeping in mind the *magnum opus* of the tradition, Kathleen Winsor’s *Forever Amber*—try to discover the typical patterns of meaning they may contain. If we succeed, we should gain some genuine insight into “what women want,” those actual women all about us today who are willing and eager to dream this dream of the “new woman.”

THE WIND LEAVES NO SHADOW is about a woman named Dona Tules, an actual figure in the history of the Southwest in the 1820’s. Dona Tules was a poor Mexican girl who rose to be the mistress of the governor and the greatest gambling queen in Santa Fé. She also came to exercise considerable political and financial influence in the Territory. Her story, while presumably true, is altogether similar in emotional pattern to those of the heroines of our other two novels. Her original capital in life is simply an exceptional degree of sex appeal. At first this causes her trouble, for early in her

career she is threatened by an intense, criminal-type male, who kills her husband and rapes her, and whom she in turn kills. The husband was a “nice guy” who gave her love and tenderness, but was unable to make his way in the world. After his death Dona Tules fights her way to success all alone, relying heavily on her original capital.

On the dust-jacket of *Mistress Glory* (our second example), one reads: “Someone was found to look after the children and the author did nothing but live in a sort of fevered dream until the entire manuscript was completed.” The book does have a hot, fevered quality. And it differs from the others in that it is not primarily a fantasy of sexual freedom or a get-ahead-in-the-world fantasy (although it is also these): its basic emotional theme is the total intertwining of sex and aggression. It contains more of purely perverse and pornographic emotion, and there are many more bizarre plot elements than is usual. For instance, the book opens with the heroine being conceived on her mother’s wedding night, but by someone other than the husband. And she is born and raised in a bawdy house. Her entrance into the *haut monde* of early 19th-century London takes place under equally unusual circumstances: she is engaged to breed an heir for her aristocratic grandfather. At the end of the book the author kills her off: she jumps, in flames, from the burning house of disrepute, dying “with a last unearthly surge of joy, transcending all things. . . .” For the rest, the book has all the usual elements.

The third and final book, *The Furies*, was written by a man, Niven Busch, who wrote *Duel in the Sun*, later made into the great movie flop of the same name. While *The Furies*, like the others, is devoted to the grand-scale trials and tribulations of an independent woman, it differs from them in being a father-daughter story as well. And so it is more a novel, less a pure fantasy—“closer to home,” figuratively as well as actually. The heroine, Vance Jefford, is enamored of her father because her dead mother had ignored her and favored her

**The Wind Leaves No Shadow*, by Ruth Laughlin (Whittlesey House); *Mistress Glory*, by Susan Morley (Dial Press); *The Furies*, by Niven Busch (Dial Press).

brothers. She becomes like her father, who prefers her to his sons, when he offers her a share in managing his huge ranch. But this male role requires, for one reason and another, that she give up sex, which she more or less willingly does—until her father makes known his decision to marry again. Then she turns on him, and the rest of the story concerns her struggle with her father and her eventual triumph over him. Unlike our other heroines, Vance is not much of a sexual meanderer. She achieves success by more masculine means—through shrewd, cut-throat business practices. Vance Jefford, like Dona Tules, is supposed to have been an actual historical personage; the story begins in the 1870's and is set in the Southwest.

T. C. Jefford, Vance's father, is the only character in all of the three books who is, strictly speaking, a character at all. The rest are never realized as persons; one never forgets that the events that are supposed to happen to them really happen only in the mind of the author, and sometimes in the mind of the reader. But this is beside the point, since we are not engaged here in aesthetic criticism, but in an attempt to elucidate fantasies. It is only necessary to point out that the substance of these books consists not so much of characters and events as of occasions for emotional release. For example, the Restoration world of *Forever Amber* is important—is "there"—solely as an opportunity for the expression of the vague, disembodied feeling of licentiousness.

FOR the "new woman" of these novels, marriage is no longer the chief objective in life; she is not content to handcuff herself and her destiny to some man for realization. Like a man, she achieves happiness and success for and by herself, using members of the opposite sex in the achievement of this purpose just as men do. The fantasy of independence is, of course, not new; what is new is chiefly the intensity with which it is taken up, the turbulence, abandon, and amorality with which the girls pursue their independence. Judging from our material,

the new woman is guilty of a profound unrealism in her excessive concentration on purely mental images of sex: she has "sex in the head" to such an extent that there could not be much of it elsewhere, not to speak of the distortion represented in this notion of how one achieves success in the world.

While marriage is no longer the dominant end-in-view for the new woman in this new pattern, it continues to play a significant role in her life: it now serves as the bridge between the family and the larger social world where one can be an individual; it is the easiest, most acceptable way of leaving home. At least the *first* marriage is this bridge (perhaps this fact can bring us closer to understanding the impressive rate of divorce in America). It serves this function for all three of our heroines. With Vance Jefford as with Dona Tules, this first marriage has a spiritual sweetness not very strongly accented in their subsequent relations with men, as if the authors wished to prove that their heroines at least tried to do things according to the rules. But both husbands are economically inept, and both are killed by the strong, criminal "man in the background." Glory's husband is also killed by this dark figure. In each case, the death of the first husband is what really sets the novel going, by turning the heroine free to make her way in a world of free enterprise.

This first-marriage complex offers other opportunities: at a critical juncture the author reflects for Dona Tules—"Ramón had possessed her heart. Her body was no more important than the cornhusk around a tamale." Women must go through a baptism by marriage.

Certainly in *Forever Amber* marriage is presented as something horrible, not merely bad: this attitude appears with special force in Amber's case because she has no occasion to confuse first love with first marriage, which confusion is made by our other heroines. Later marriages are either business maneuvers, breathing spells for the hard-driven independent woman, or a kind of self-ironic

regression to femininity after independent status has been attained.

At any rate, our new-woman novel undeniably reflects the changed meaning of marriage. Since we are dealing with a fantasy process, it is not necessary for the female reader to have put marriage to all of these uses in order to participate in the fantasy. It is enough that she has viewed—or has had the impulse to view—the successive periods of her own marriage in ways emotionally equivalent to those of our heroines. These novels let us see the way women have come to regard men, including their husbands.

SUCCESS for our heroines is essentially similar to success for a man, except that personally they must not be masculine—aggressive, but not masculine; instead, they function as extraordinary sexual objects—concentrated libidinal magnets. Just as in the old-style historical romances the young hero often advanced himself by attracting the favor of a countess or queen, so our heroines get ahead by shrewdly choosing the objects of their abandon. Dona Tules becomes the mistress of the Governor, Glory of the Prince of Wales of her day, and Amber of Charles II. Otherwise, their success is that of a man. Dona Tules wants to set up her own gambling salon and “not share her bed or money with any man,” and she succeeds. Glory achieves success on the stage, and later as a partner in a crime syndicate. Vance Jefford wrests her father’s ranch from him—with the help of her lover, it is true, but even men must take on partners in order to conquer the world.

But on the deepest level, success, when it comes, is still felt to be important primarily for the relation it has to men. Success as such is really secondary. (Many male figures in fiction have also claimed to see the matter this way.) The woman who is successful as well as sexy can hardly be beaten: she is in a position to make as much of her independence as can be made of it, and to avoid as many of its terrors as possible. But it is important that this independence itself remains valuable for the variety and intensity

it introduces *into her relations with men*.

We have now come to the heart of the matter. In her fantasies, the new woman is toying with all the possible relations she might have with men, from all-out Don Juanism to utter masochistic devotion. This is because, as D. H. Lawrence pointed out, men have themselves become so vacillating in their notions of what they want women to be that the women, out of pure disgust with trying to be six things at once, have taken the matter into their own hands. They are thinking of being what they themselves *want* to be, and of making the men like it. This, I suggest, is at present the real core of present-day female “independence.” Whatever the socio-economic causes, the new motivation toward independence is not so much a positive interest in freedom as a disgust with the ineptitude and indecision of men in dealing with their—the women’s—problems, and an effort to solve it by female initiative in the relation between the sexes, an initiative ending however in submission.

Let us look in these terms at some of the many relations our authors have dreamed up for their heroines. In the forest of bizarre emotions of *Mistress Glory* we have our heroine hired to produce babies and, instead, simply satisfying an appetite. Later she corrupts stalwart workers and students, and drives an elderly music-teacher into a helpless frenzy. At one point she forces the man who keeps her to understand “in his heart . . . that she was the master, not he. . . .” And finally she turns over to the police a man with whom she had this so auspicious beginning: “He uttered a moan, low and fierce . . . he ripped at the cloth of her costume with all his strength.” There is also a poetic playwright in the background who is distinguished by the fact that she doesn’t go to bed with him. One could take example after example from our three novels. But this would become tedious. Let us simply recognize that our heroines are explorers in the new-found land of female option. *Forever Amber*, the classic, is a veritable comic strip of a young lady’s possible relations to men.

Who are the male leads in these movies of the mind? What kind of man is the prevailing type? In *The Wind Leaves No Shadow* it is Don Manuel, last governor of the Southwest under Mexican rule—"He made other men seem puny and impotent." T. C. Jefford, father of our heroine Vance, dominates the male landscape in *The Furies*. And in the fevered world of *Mistress Glory* we have Innocent Paradine, lord of London's criminals, as the lodestone of Glory's abiding interest. All three are strong, ruthless, and as self-sufficient as leaders of men should be. They are all men who will "stop at nothing" to gain their ends; and they exercise a kind of hypnotic charm over other men. All are engaged in big projects in the world of affairs. Each, in a sense, is an oversized male personalization of objective social and economic forces—a bit evil, a bit inhuman. But all end badly, being killed or losing their positions of power, or both.

In all three cases, however, the man is a major factor in the woman's coming to power. The process by which the man serves this purpose takes up the first half of each of the books; the latter half is devoted to the struggle between the man and woman, with final victory going to the woman. Even when they are not present in person, these men serve as the dark forces in the background around which the mood and much of the action pivot. They are the very problem of maleness, mystically conceived.

Here again, *Forever Amber* gives us the whole thing in classical proportion. Amber's relation to Lord Bruce Carlton expresses not only the pure essence of this male-female relation so typical of the whole genre, but also perhaps contains the final meaning of the new woman's fantasy life. If we are inclined to view this life sympathetically—"sympathetically" from the male point of view, that is—then the emotion which generates the image of Lord Carlton can certainly be interpreted as a desire on the part of the women, despite everything else they do and don't do, to give themselves submissively and devotedly to some "really male" man. On

the other hand, the absurdly idealized image of "maleness" which our heroines have created might also be taken to suggest that they are interested in submitting to the male *only* in his "ideal" form. In any case, independence is seen only in masculine terms: female independence is clearly modeled on the ideal male, or it measures its rewards in its achieved relations to the male. For the new woman "independence" and "masculinity" seemed irrevocably tied together; there is no sign of any fantasy to be independent as a woman.

THERE are profound social causes, which need not be entered into here, for the breakdown of traditional female roles. It is a waste of time to try to resolve the predicament of modern women with a single grand gesture—"Back to the kitchen, home, and children!" A good number of women don't want to go back to the kitchen (that is, to the life of the submissive homemaker); many women cannot go back; others try and are unable to stay there. Moreover, there is no metaphysical reason why they should go back. The home and the family are undergoing a profound process of readjustment to the overwhelming consequences of mass society, industrial economy, and planetary politics—especially here in America, which is in the vanguard of all these movements. To tell women to save themselves by re-identifying with the old forms is, to put it simply, reactionary—like telling men to return to the church, or the small town, or the farm. We are all, men and women, in the new world of big-city civilization up to our necks, and to hunger after the past is both dangerous and useless. Moreover, we built the cities; and they express something we want.

In our inspection of popular historical fiction, we have seen evidence that women are much concerned—even in their mechanized daydreaming—with this question of their new, more independent ("alienated," if you like) condition. We have observed also that marriage for the new woman, or the woman in this new condition, is no longer an absolute value, but rather one

instrument among others; and that a woman's "original capital" is not her virginity, as in the conventional bourgeois view, but plainly and predominantly her "sex appeal."

But most important of all, we have seen that women in their quest for freedom and a new self-expression have not escaped from the male ideal: they still hanker after male leadership, and when they assume control over their own lives, they tend either to take a man's attitude toward themselves, or else to require that the world contain somewhere the real embodiment of their absurdly ideal notion of masculine power—toward which, however, they remain ambivalent.

Now, the matter of controlling one's own life is all-important for the issue of independence, since that person is most independent who has the most secure control over himself. But self-control means to keep one's instincts in hand as required by modern society; and this tends to work against the sexual interests of the individual. A system of control which does not permit the expression of sex is worse than useless: it is

pernicious in every human sense. A woman's pattern of psychic control must be different from that of a man if it is not to contradict her sexuality. A man, sexually, must be able to *give* through the barricade of his control; a woman must be able to *receive*, even to *invite*—after so many years of oversimple "feminism," women themselves are coming to recognize this need.

How *receive*, how *invite*, how be independent *as a woman*—this is the basic issue for the modern independent woman. In emerging from her eternal night of submission into the daylight world of individuality, she has assumed male modes, has continued to identify with men, even though this identification is now active and aggressive. This is no good because it is not female—that can be said even if we are not prepared to say what is "female." The problem for the modern woman is precisely to *discover* the "female," to develop a mode of individuality and independence suitable to her own sex. The bosom novel gives us clues only as to the dimensions of the task, but none as to its solution.

A CUP OF TEA

A Story

JULIUS HORWITZ

THE little girl stretched herself out alongside the man and said, "Hello Mister." He said "Hello" and wondered what would happen next. The girl was dressed in an oversized tattered green hand-me-down bathing suit and you could see by the blue of her lips that she had probably been in the water all afternoon. Her thin little body was shaking and he offered her his towel. She politely took it, dried herself and said, "Thanks Mister." She then began to look at him as though she had known him for a long time. The little girl had that curious grown-up, knowing air about her that made one feel as though one were talking to an adult.

"Will you take me into the deep water? I can't swim. Will you take me into the deep water?" He got up from the hard cement and they both walked toward the pool. He jumped into the water first and then she shouted, "Hold up your hands. I'll jump into your arms!" She jumped and splashed water into his face and then climbed on his back. He carried her off into the deep water while she squealed with delight and looked around for her friends so that she could show off.

Much later, after repeated trips around the pool, she said to him, "I have to go home now Mister, are you going home?" He decided to leave the pool. It was already past five.

"I'll meet you outside," she shouted and then disappeared into the women's dressing room.

HE DIDN'T recognize her at first when he saw her coming up to him, an old dirty cotton dress covering her body, her hair in wet streaks, her face bright and shiny. They walked along, asking questions of one another.

She was a little Irish girl named Nora Delly and she lived on the Hudson River waterfront, on Greenwich Street, a few blocks from the Carmine Street swimming pool. She lived in a four-room cold-water flat and hated it because her mother had to heat the stove for hot water and the place was always too cold or too hot.

They passed an ice-cream wagon and he treated her to an ice-cream pie. She left him on Seventh Avenue with the promise to look for him whenever she came to the pool.

All during that summer he used to meet her in the pool and take her for long rides into the deep water. She introduced him to her friends and he soon became a celebrated person at the pool. Whenever he would come to the pool, the kids would crowd around him fighting for the privilege of riding on his back into the five-foot water.

One day he decided to invite a half dozen of them to his room for some ice cream and cookies. That was the beginning of a pattern that was to remain for a very long time. Nora enjoyed herself tremendously at these parties and played hostess for him, deciding how much each kid should eat and how long they should stay. Once a week, perhaps only once a month and sometimes on Sunday afternoon, the kids would knock on his door and come in to muss up his papers, look at his books and peck away on the typewriter. He began to hear their conversation now. What had once been innocent babble now took order and form and he could understand the logic of their ideas. They all at-

JULIUS HORWITZ has been writing radio scripts, and working on a series of short stories about Manhattan. This is his first published short story. Mr. Horwitz was born in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1920, and attended Ohio State and Columbia Universities.

tended parochial school and attacked Protestantism with the same bitterness that they denounced their teachers. The more he heard Nora talk and some of the others, the more he began to be nervous about himself. He saw that these kids, the oldest of them only ten, had a vocabulary of definite opinions and many of their inculcated ideas were quite opposed to his own. He became afraid of saying certain things and the buoyant feeling he had felt all summer disappeared.

His difficulty was simple enough. He was Jewish and he was afraid that one day one of them would make some remark and he would be forced to take a position and he wasn't quite certain what he would say. And so whenever the children spoke, he listened in dread and wondered what fleeting innocent stream of conversation would suddenly turn on him and force him to take a stand. He felt that he was caught up in a humiliating situation and he often wondered how the consciousness of this idea arose in his mind. He didn't feel particularly Jewish and he saw no reason why he should be so disturbed over the possibility of an incident. He used to lie awake in the late evening and think about the pleasant afternoons at the swimming pool and the kids fighting to ride on his back and the noisy parties with ice cream and cake. He remembered how pleased he had felt when he told himself that he was giving these Irish kids a break, taking them out of their dismal cold-water flats, exposing them to kindness, to culture, to afternoons surrounded by objects they could never see in their own homes. He felt that since he had treated them kindly, taught them how to swim and peck away at a typewriter, they would forget he was Jewish and if ever a damning phrase would form itself on one of their lips, their conscience would immediately silence the insulting words and he would be free. He began to wonder how they talked among themselves and if they ever discussed him. He would have given anything to overhear some of their conversations. But then there is something mysterious about other people's con-

versations and we never seem to hear them. In a whole lifetime we may only overhear one or two references to ourselves—and then it comes as a rude or pleasant shock. Almost as though we were moving through a museum and then suddenly at the end of a long corridor we came face to face with our own portrait. But what could they say? Could they call him “that lousy Jew”—“that Christ-killer”—but then why would they come back and why would they sit on his chairs and watch their feet?

One day Nora said to him, “Mama asks why you don't come up and visit us. I've told her about you.”

He didn't want to go to Nora's house. And he knew the reason why. If the children hadn't been able to see through him, then the mother certainly would. And then his Jewishness would be on display. But he knew that he had to go and they set the time for the next Friday evening.

THE building Nora lived in was as ugly as the rest of the tenements on Greenwich Street. He knocked on the door and Mrs. Delly answered. “Come in, come in, we've been expecting you.”

He sat down in an oversized chair. The room was drab, ordinary. The oil stove gave off a curious odor. The conversation began with housing. All of the time that they sat discussing the housing situation in the neighborhood, Nora sat crosslegged on the couch looking at her friend, looking at her mother, glad that the fencing was over and her friend was able to talk to her mother.

Mrs. Delly shifted her heavy body and then motioned Nora and her friend into the kitchen. The three of them sat down to a cup of tea. And then the fear hit him. The lights in the kitchen were bright. She could get a good look at him. She would see that he was Jewish. And then she would begin to say, what did you say your name was, yes, that isn't a Catholic name, is it, what kind of a name is that now? And he would be forced to say, that's a Jewish name. I'm Jewish. As though being Jewish was the most terrible fact of existence.

He couldn't control his tea cup and some of the hot water spilled on his jacket. Nora immediately fetched a towel. "That's a shame," Mrs. Delly said, "but don't worry, it won't stain." He tried to think of something to say. He felt a terrible silence. Nora came to his rescue.

"Did you see our white kitty? We keep him to kill mice. He killed three mice last week."

"Now Nora, don't be talking to your friend about mice while we're sitting and drinking our tea. What was it you said you were studying at school?"

He knew now that there was no escape for him. She had guessed that he was Jewish. The question about school was only an attempt to link his Jewishness with a particular subject. He thought of telling her that he was studying to be a radio mechanic. But he couldn't and blurted out the truth. He was studying to be a teacher. Mrs. Delly nodded her head and he could see that she was beginning to tie up her thoughts.

"It's good that you have the patience to want to study. So many people can't wait and they get themselves jobs that lead to nothing. My Tommy could have been a refrigerator mechanic instead of breaking his back on the water-front."

He sipped on his tea and nodded in agreement.

"You're not a Catholic boy, are you?" she suddenly asked. "Nora has been telling me for months about a nice man that she met at the swimming pool and she thought he was Jewish. I thought I'd ask you."

He felt himself go limp. A humiliating flush that he couldn't control swept over his face. He saw Nora staring at him with a puzzled look in her eyes. And then he could feel stirring deep within him the necessity of a retort—a defense of his position phrased in the language of the long struggle for the dignity of the individual, for the brotherhood of man, for the rights of all people—a speech that would go beyond the insult he had felt at the lips of Mrs. Delly, and unite him and Mrs. Delly and Nora into one great bond.

He placed his cup of tea down on the table. "I could never drink hot tea," he said apologetically. "It always chokes up on me."

"Oh that's a pity!" said Mrs. Delly. "Why didn't you say so before? Nora fetch your friend a bottle of cold beer from the ice box. How'll that be?"

Nora walked over to the ice box in the far corner of the kitchen. She wondered why her friend had flushed so. She had never seen him so upset. Once he had raised his voice when Molly Donovan had spilled some ink on one of his books. Could it have been something that her mother had said?

THE U.A.W. FIGHTS RACE PREJUDICE

Case History on the Industrial Front

IRVING HOWE AND B. J. WIDICK

IN THE 1920's Detroit became the unchallenged motor capital and thereby one of the great industrial centers of the world. In the 1930's it was the scene of a vast labor upsurge, the result of which was a minor revolution in American life. In the 1940's it was wracked by race riots more bloody and prolonged than any that had recently occurred in the South.

Detroit is a city where the robotization of labor and the mechanization of life reach their height, where the strains of American society are ugliest and sharpest. Here Northern and Southern culture patterns meet most intimately and violently. Hundreds of thousands of its auto workers are Southerners from Alabama farms and Kentucky towns. Physically cramped and psychologically tense, the city has acquired a raw, brutal quality that can be found nowhere else—a quality that is partly the result of a clash between Southern folkways, uprooted from their natural context, and a mechanical, depersonalized urbanism.

TO THOSE who have followed the history of any one of the various state FEPC laws, it may have been something of a surprise to see the number of complaints lodged against trade unions for discriminatory practices. Here, IRVING HOWE and B. J. WIDICK analyze the attempt of one trade union—the United Automobile Workers (CIO)—not only to wipe out discrimination in its own ranks, but to give its members some sense of the injustice and wastefulness of discrimination in general. Mr. Howe, who has been a frequent contributor to COMMENTARY and other periodicals, was born in New York City in 1920, and studied at City College and Brooklyn College. Mr. Widick has long been active in the trade union movement, and has himself been a member of the UAW, as well as other unions. Much of the material in this article is drawn from their book, *The UAW and Walter Reuther*, which is to be published this month by Random House.

Detroit is lacerated by complex racial and religious conflicts. The Southern whites cling to anti-Negro prejudice; between them and the large Polish minority there is constant, though seldom reported, friction. Before the large-scale influx of Southerners, the Poles showed little anti-Negro feeling, but in recent years they have "learned" from the Southerners. And naturally—for the Negroes are probably the only group below the Poles in Detroit's scale of social status.

Almost everything about Detroit has made life difficult for its 350,000 Negroes. Though living in a Northern city, they have suffered from blatant forms of discrimination usually associated with the South. They have been packed into "Paradise Valley," a slum nearly as dreadful as the one that lies on the flank of the nation's capital; they have been confined to the worst jobs, and have been the last hired and the first fired; and they have been subjected to intermittent orgies of violence.

The United Automobile Workers (CIO) has had to face the "Negro problem" from the day of its formation. No union in the United States has experienced greater difficulties with regard to race relations; no organization of comparable size provides so crucial a setting for the study of the tangled relationships and periodic crises that arise when a serious attempt is made to combat race prejudice in daily life.

THE auto industry was one of the last major industries in the United States to hire large numbers of Negro workers. Behind this fact is a depressing bit of historical irony: the white auto workers, before the rise of the CIO, had been too weak to call sustained strikes, and hence the companies had little need for Negro strikebreakers.

Negroes were excluded from regular jobs in most auto plants as a matter of course. Until 1935 only the Ford River Rouge plant hired Negroes in large numbers.

Those Negroes who did work in the auto plants were confined either to janitorial chores or to the unpleasant, back-breaking foundry jobs that white men did not want. Except in the Rouge plant, they were barred from skilled work. Even after the industry's unionization, this policy prevailed; it has by no means been stamped out yet.

For the companies, racial discrimination proved advantageous in several ways. It assured them of a large pool of cheap docile labor that might be used as a threat to beat down demands made by white workers; it meant, too, that the sharp color line drawn in the plants would hinder the organization of workers into one united group. The employers' defense—or rationalization—of discriminatory hiring policies was either that Negro workers were unable to perform skilled work or that white men refused to work beside them. In the latter claim there was, of course, considerable truth, for racial prejudice cuts deep into all classes in American society. But the essential point is that the companies, while they had not themselves originated racial prejudice, were often ready to take advantage of it.

When the big sitdown strikes broke out in 1936 and 1937, few Negroes participated. During the Studebaker sitdown at South Bend in November 1936, the Oldsmobile sitdown at Lansing in January 1937, and the one at Flint General Motors in February 1937, most Negro workers simply stayed at home. They neither cooperated with the strikers nor showed any willingness to serve as scabs; they merely watched, warily.

It is not hard to understand why they took this attitude. Past relations with white workers in the plants had usually been bad; at Flint Chevrolet, for example, there had been bitter clashes between white and colored workers for some months before the sitdown. The AFL, then still the dominant labor group, had often been viciously discriminatory, and Negro workers saw little

reason to suppose the UAW would be better. But perhaps the strongest reason for the Negro workers' scepticism about the sitdowns was that they had become habituated to following the timid leadership of the Negro middle class, a precarious group that depended on the patronage and blessing of Michigan's white industrialists.

Of course, both the UAW and the CIO as a whole, fearing that Negroes might be used as strikebreakers, formally pledged themselves to non-discriminatory policies. And the very nature of industrial unionism made impractical the racial divisions common in the AFL. Craft unions could appeal to limited sections of a labor force, pitting skilled against unskilled, white against black, and thereby aggravating racial tensions. But the new industrial unions, simply in order to survive, had to win the support of at least a minority of the Negro workers. For some labor leaders in the auto industry racial equality was a matter of dedicated conviction, for others a mere necessity. In any case, the CIO unions had no choice; without racial equality, the mass industrial unions could not have been built.

DURING the period of its early organization, the UAW took special pains to win Negro workers. Its press and publicity emphasized the theme of racial equality; if a stray organizer showed prejudice, he was quickly dismissed; and white workers were slowly and painfully taught that if they failed to cooperate with Negroes they would never win their demands. When a Negro worker showed qualities of leadership he was quickly encouraged; in the Chrysler sitdown of March 1937, a Negro, Sam Fanroy, was elected to the strike committee. As a rule, wherever the Negroes were a substantial fraction of a plant's labor force they cooperated much more readily than where they were a small group, for in the former instance they felt strong enough not merely to fight with white workers against management but also, if necessary, by themselves against white workers. In the Detroit Midland Steel plant, where about half

the workers were Negroes, relations were excellent; at the Dodge plant, where fewer Negroes worked, clashes broke out.

In the Southern auto plants the problem was far more difficult, for the union clashed with a fervently defended pattern of prejudice. At the General Motors plant in Atlanta, union organizers could not persuade white workers to admit Negroes into the local, and it was only with some difficulty that the whites were dissuaded from pressing for the Negroes' discharge. As late as 1941 Negro workers were still kept out of the Atlanta GM local, and only afterwards were they reluctantly admitted.

In order to gain recognition, the UAW was sometimes forced to accept contracts that perpetuated some old plant conditions. That meant that Negroes remained frozen in low-status jobs, and consequently that their original doubts about the union were reinforced. In other situations the UAW risked stirring dormant prejudices by demanding the improvement of Negro workers' conditions. When the UAW forced companies to upgrade Negroes, some white workers felt that their ethnic "superiority" and economic status were being endangered. No quick solution to such problems was possible, if only because the antagonism between skilled white and unskilled Negro criss-crossed the general skilled-unskilled antagonism. But the mere fact that industrial unions like the UAW tend to lessen competition between craft groups within an industry helped smooth race relations. After some experience, white workers could be made to see that improvement of Negro conditions also helped improve their own conditions.

Gradually, at least a minority of Negro workers became convinced that the UAW could be trusted to defend them. Big rhetoric meant little, but little actions could mean much. When Negro delegates to the 1940 UAW convention at St. Louis suffered from discrimination, the union voted to hold future gatherings only where Negroes would receive equal treatment. A small enough matter—but precisely such concrete little steps make the deepest impression.

OF ALL the auto companies, Ford had worked out by far the most astute policy on Negro employment. By hiring ten per cent of his workers from among Negroes, Henry Ford gained the clinging loyalty of the entire colored community. White workers would remain at their jobs at the Rouge because they had no alternative; Negro workers, because they considered the jobs lucky breaks made possible by Mr. Ford's friendliness to their people.

By sprinkling donations among Negro organizations and hiring thousands of Negro workers, Ford became a power in the Detroit Negro world. He donated the parish house of the St. Matthew's Episcopal Church and befriended its Father Langton Daniels; his Negro agent, Donald Marshall, taught Sunday School classes at St. Matthew's; and once a year Henry Ford himself honored the church with a visit. He also gave substantial aid to the Second Baptist Church, whose minister, Reverend Robert Bradby, was one of his personal favorites. When either Reverend Bradby or Father Daniels recommended a Negro for a job, he was as good as hired. Negro politicians also, though less successfully, served as labor agents for Ford.

Ford also helped to finance the all-Negro village of Inkster and provided relief jobs at one dollar a day when its residents were unemployed. The Fords entertained committees from Negro women's clubs, invited George Washington Carver to their home, and paid Marian Anderson and Dorothy Maynor to sing over the radio on the Ford Sunday Hour. These things made a deep impression on Detroit's Negro world—and the Ford Company made the most of it.

When A. Philip Randolph, head of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, was invited in 1938 to speak at a Negro church, those of its members who were employed at Ford were threatened with firing. After Randolph spoke, some were actually dismissed and frankly told that Randolph's speech was the reason. When Mordecai Johnson, president of Howard University, made a pro-union speech at a Negro church, a second appearance was denied him three

months later—for in the meantime, the minister of the church admitted, “Don Marshall heard about the speech and was very angry. . . . He said he would never hire another member of the Bethel Church if the church allowed any more speakers to come here and criticize the company.” And when the Negro community voted Democratic in the 1932 elections, Don Marshall did not hesitate to say, “My employer, he was disappointed when he saw the returns from the Negro districts. . . .”

Ford’s policy almost paid off. In April 1941, when Ford was negotiating with a puny AFL local in an attempt to edge out the UAW, a group of Negro clergymen urged the Negro workers to support the AFL against the UAW. Pressure had been applied by the Ford company for public support of the AFL, and though the ministers privately expressed their distaste for the AFL’s record on race relations, they endorsed it as “a truly American organization . . . [which] has acted in the best interests of the Negro. . . .”

For the Negro middle class, the situation was admittedly difficult. Negro storekeepers and professionals, ministers and politicians, depended on Ford patronage in the direct form of subsidies and the indirect form of jobs. In an excellent study of Negro auto labor, Lloyd Bailer writes: “As long as the church membership is employed, the minister is able to keep his head above water. His ability to place job applicants swells church-attendance and enables him to keep his flock.” Little wonder that the UAW found it so hard to organize Negro workers!

A minority of Negro leaders—including Walter White, head of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and the Reverend Horace White of Detroit—was bold enough to risk helping the union. When the crucial 1941 Ford strike broke out, several hundred Negro workers remained in the plant, under the supervision of the Ford Service Department, after white workers walked out. But the Negroes could no longer be used as a solid strikebreaking bloc, and a large section of them was neutral

enough to insure the success of the strike. Later they would be convinced that their place was in the union.

WITH the outbreak of the war in 1941, a new crisis in race relations began in the auto plants. Among the causes were:

(1) The influx of new Southern white workers brought into the UAW thousands of men who knew nothing of the union’s slowly nurtured tradition of tolerance;

(2) The virtual exclusion of Negroes from skilled jobs in auto plants at a time when the government was bemoaning a manpower shortage aroused immense resentment among Negroes;

(3) The Detroit housing crisis aggravated already severe tensions between Negro and white;

(4) President Roosevelt’s Executive Order 8802 prohibiting discrimination in war industries had aroused great hopes among Negroes; when it was largely ignored by industry and loosely enforced by the government, their resentment was increased.

When conversion to war production in the auto plants resulted in the upgrading of some Negro workers, many whites rebelled. A series of stoppages broke out against such upgrading or even against assignments to working with Negroes—and the union was usually helpless to prevent them. Two stoppages took place at Packard, one in November 1941 and the other in June 1943; four at Chrysler in February and June 1942; two at Timken Detroit Axle in July 1942; and one at Hudson Naval Ordnance in June 1942.

The stoppages at Packard were typical. In November 1941, white workers sat down on the job after two Negro metal polishers had been transferred to war work. The company readily withdrew the Negroes, and the officials of the Packard UAW local did little to defend them. In UAW circles there was talk that the Ku Klux Klan was influential in the local and had threatened to oppose its officials if they defended the Negroes. One white Packard worker told an interviewer: “About forty per cent of the

workers here are Polish. There are also a lot of Southern whites. Both of them are very prejudiced. The rumor got out not long ago that Negroes were going to start working in the trim department—where I work. Most of them there are Southern whites. They said 'I'll be goddamned if I'm going to work with a goddam black nigger.'"

In 1943 another stoppage took place in Packard. When Negroes in the foundry briefly protested because they were not being upgraded according to seniority provisions, twenty-five thousand white workers walked out for four days. Walter White, NAACP leader, wrote that "subsequent investigation indicated that only a relatively small percentage of Packard workers actually wanted to go on strike," but the sad truth seems to be that he was wrong. Actually, thousands of Packard workers milled around the plant, listening to anti-Negro harangues. When R. J. Thomas, then UAW president, urged the men to return to work, he was booed.

But if the situation at Packard was appalling, Negroes were being upgraded in such plants as Kelsey Hayes, Consolidated Brass, and Briggs without any serious trouble. It is significant that in those plants, such as Briggs, where the UAW had its best locals, there was the least trouble. From the picture of the war years the terrible anti-Negro riots and walkouts jut out sharply, but it must be remembered that all the while the union leadership was trying desperately to educate new members, and to remind old members of its tradition of racial equality. During the bloody riot of 1943 not a single incident occurred in the plants—a remarkable fact.

UAW leaders and responsible militants had been taught by their wartime experience that the problem of prejudice would remain with the union for a long time to come. The friendliness that might develop during a strike would soon evaporate and in its place there would again arise the fears and hatred that are part of the heritage of so many white Americans. The momentary enthusiasm of Negro workers for the union could quickly give way to their more basic suspicion that all "white organizations" were

their enemies. In the war years, the union had learned that once a riot started little could be done to prevent it from spreading over an entire city; the patient work of education carried on over the years could be destroyed in an hour.

WHILE the union was being shaken by outbursts of anti-Negro feeling, a significant debate was taking place at its conventions. Since 1940 demands had been raised in the UAW for the creation of a special post for a Negro on its executive board. Negro members seemed largely to favor this proposal, perhaps seeing in it a way to protect their status in the union. Here was a situation made to order for a group ready to engage in demagogic exploitation of Negro grievances—and the Communist party eager for the job.

At the 1943 UAW convention in Buffalo, one hundred and fifty out of two thousand delegates were Negroes. A caucus of Negro delegates was held to which all UAW leaders were invited to explain their views. In a principled and courageous speech, Walter Reuther told the Negroes that he considered any special position designated for a minority group an inverse form of Jim Crow which he could not support. But with the demagoguery of the Communist leaders and the political inexperience of most of the Negro delegates, ninety per cent of the latter voted to support the caucus headed by George Addes and staffed by Stalinists, because it favored a special Negro post. Though the proposal was defeated on the convention floor, most of the Negro delegates were led into a temporary alliance with the Stalinists because the latter seemed to them their special champions.

The issue itself is of great interest. There is a special Negro problem and it needs special attention. Consequently, why not elect a special member of the executive board to handle the problem? And who could do that so well as a Negro—perhaps a "special kind" of Negro? But as the more alert Negro workers were soon to realize, this proposal meant that a Negro was to be "up-

graded" in the union not because of his talents but because of the color of his skin—and was this not merely a special inversion of the practice to which they so bitterly and rightly objected in the shops? Suppose, further, that the proposal were extended just a bit: since Negro workers had special problems, why not help them by putting them in special . . . separate . . . locals?

How dubious were the motives of the Stalinists in supporting this proposal was later shown at the 1947 Michigan CIO convention. There William Humphries, a Negro delegate and already a member of the Michigan CIO board, denounced the proposal for a special post for a Negro by insisting that any self-respecting Negro would want to be elected to office not because he was a Negro but because he was a good leader. When Humphries ran for office, the Addes-Stalinist bloc did not vote for him—the Stalinists would support a Negro only if he were in their tow and had been properly stamped: "Negro." By then, their motives were understood and the majority of delegates, white and Negro, repudiated them. True, the Reuther group's opposition to the special board post had been politically disadvantageous in 1943, but by 1948 it had resulted in healthier relations between white and colored unionists.

WITH the end of the war, the old discriminatory patterns in hiring reappeared. Thousands of Negro men and women lost their jobs and, even if sometimes mistakenly, could not help feeling that this was because of Jim Crow practices. "The Negro," said Walter Reuther, "has experienced the quick erosion of his wartime gains. . . ."

The crucial test for the UAW with regard to race relations will come if unemployment in Michigan, now on the increase, reaches large proportions. There is as yet no serious unemployment among Detroit auto workers, but in Muskegon and Grand Rapids many auto workers are being laid off. Since, as a rule, Negro auto workers have less seniority than whites, the Negroes will suffer

first and most heavily from unemployment. And once the auto workers begin to fear for their jobs, some whites will probably feel that they would be more secure if Negroes were driven out of the auto plants. If there are any serious anti-Negro outbursts in the next year or two in Detroit, they will probably be the result of this growing job insecurity among all auto workers.

Nor do the employment policies of the large corporations particularly improve the status of Negro workers. Recently, to cite one example, the Chrysler corporation hired hundreds of new men, but almost none of them were Negroes. After Chrysler Local 7 of the UAW protested, a few Negroes were hired. Ford has hired a few more Negroes in the better jobs, but it is difficult to say whether this is the result of the traditional Ford policy of catering to the Negro population, union pressure (the Ford local has one of the best records on this question), or the "enlightened" labor policy of Henry Ford II. (UAW people, who find themselves at present in a very tough bargaining position with Ford, are inclined to regard this "enlightenment" as the invention of Ford's public-relations department.) In most of the auto plants there is little, if any, effort by the management to upgrade Negro workers to the better jobs. Squeezed between the indifference of management and the rumbling hostility of a portion of the white workers, Negroes are still a distinctly underprivileged group in the auto labor force.

On a formal level, the UAW has acted vigorously to defend the Negro workers. Its FEPC department has called regular conferences to push union work against Jim Crow; its educational film, *Brotherhood of Man*, an excellent piece of work, has been widely circulated; its numerous printed circulars have persuasively argued for equality. But the problem goes deeper.

SOME people cling to a stereotyped view that a militant and aggressive rank and file of union members is held back only by the leaders' timidity or bureaucratic indifference. Whatever the merit of this view on

other issues, it is certainly false with regard to the UAW and the Negroes. The truth is that in the UAW it is the top leadership that has the best understanding of the problem and the best record in dealing with it. Time after time, UAW leaders have risked the displeasure of their followers by advocating equal rights for Negroes. Endowed with a larger view of social trends than most members of the union, these leaders have sometimes butted their heads against the wall of prejudice. The records of the secondary officials, those who run the locals, vary widely. Some, such as the leaders of the Briggs local, have consistently fought for their Negro members. In others, leaders merely go through the motions of supporting the union policy.

The plain truth is that the bulk of the prejudice in the UAW is to be found in the rank and file, especially among workers of Southern or Polish extraction. There is a constant subterranean war in the minds and hearts of the white workers between prejudice and the education received in the union. Two incidents may illustrate this conflict. In November 1948 a Negro woman employed at the Hudson plant was disciplined for what other employes considered an unjust reason; first her department and then the entire plant shut down in protest. That would seem a heartening display of solidarity between white and Negro workers, would it not? But only a few days before this shut-down, the Hudson local had held a Hallowe'en party from which three Negro couples were barred by policemen called by an unnamed local official to "keep the niggers out." After much maneuvering and two membership meetings, the local instructed its committees to refrain from discrimination at future social affairs. But no one seriously believes that a mere resolution is going to solve this problem. Actually, quite a few UAW locals avoid dances because their officers fear to face the problem of "mixed dancing."

NEXT to promotion and seniority, social affairs remain the largest source of racial friction in the union. White workers who have acquiesced in union policy or learned to work

and go on strike with Negroes are still unwilling to go to the same dance with them. The Briggs local was compelled to cancel its first dance in 1937 when white members protested against the presence of Negroes; but the local's leadership has since taken a strong stand against discrimination and in recent years has held completely unsegregated affairs. In other locals, Negroes are seldom present at social affairs. In such matters, the vision and courage of local leaders would seem to be decisive.

A similar difficulty has arisen in sports activities. UAW locals have active baseball leagues in which white and Negro members play on the same teams. No problem arises there. But some of the very same men who play baseball with Negroes bitterly object to the union's attempt to organize a bowling league on a non-discriminatory basis. In 1948, after the UAW failed to force the American Bowling League to remove Jim Crow provisions from its constitution, it started a new bowling league. Few of Walter Reuther's acts have been more unpopular with large sections of the union's ranks. Why will a white worker play baseball with a Negro but refuse to bowl with him? One possible explanation is that white workers feel that there is greater impersonality in baseball than in bowling. When the baseball game is over, white and colored players usually dress and go their separate ways; but the bowling game is itself an intimate social event, in which members' wives participate, and which is followed by beer drinking.

Such contradictory behavior seems to be the result of strong feelings of prejudice being jostled by new equalitarian ideas picked up in the union. But the prejudice is at the center, and the new ideas at the periphery of many workers' minds. One conclusion that seems legitimate is that the minds of white workers remain compartmentalized: their frequent readiness to consort on equal terms with Negroes in the shops and on picket lines seldom extends to life outside the shop. In the May 1948 Chrysler strike, Negroes participated to an unprecedented extent in picketing, soup-kitchen work, and

similar strike activities, and the attitude of white workers towards the Negroes was warm and cordial. Yet when the local's FEPC committee shortly afterwards proposed a campaign against discrimination in restaurants near the plants, white workers were at best lukewarm, and many were openly hostile.

THE UAW's experience with the "Negro problem" provides a crucial test of how race prejudice can be combated and destroyed in practice. The experience is by no means conclusive or finished; the great test will come if employment seriously falls off. But a few conclusions are possible.

For the Negro workers, the UAW has provided a vital arena for expression and a means of achieving personal dignity. Negro participation in union affairs, though still inhibited and hampered, is on the increase; in some recent local union elections higher proportions of Negroes voted than did whites. In the UAW many Negro workers have learned to talk boldly and freely; they have learned that the whole white world is not a conspiracy against them but that there are unionists ready even to risk their careers to help them; they have begun, shyly and slowly, to live, work, eat, and play with white workers at the UAW summer camps. The spirit of the Negro workers today is as different from what it was fifteen years ago as the spirit of Ford workers is different from what it was during Harry Bennett's rule.

Here, then, is proof that the problem of prejudice can be attacked in daily life. It must be solved largely by empirical means: most white and Negro workers can overcome their fears and prejudices only by working and living together in the plants and, afterwards, by social contacts outside the plants. But in turn—and the paradox is only apparent—this empirical program can be instituted *only* by a leadership motivated by a compelling long-range program of social and economic democracy, an idealistic vision that would endow it with the perseverance and patience to work at the day-to-day tasks.

The role of white leadership is usually decisive. In the nature of things, most unions

begin with white leaders who have it in their power to win the confidence of Negro workers and thereby hasten the development of Negro leaders. This they can do by a firm policy of equal treatment, without condescension or favoritism. Few of the Reuther administration's acts have so helped it win the *eventual* confidence of the Negroes in the UAW as its refusal to be swept into supporting the demagogic proposal for a separate Negro post on the union's executive board.

The blend of long-range idealism and immediate tenacity of which we have spoken is particularly necessary for the UAW's ultimate task in the field of race relations—to try to spread its anti-prejudice education down through the ranks, where it is most needed. Rational appeals, formal statements, impressive resolutions have only a limited value. It is necessary to make over, so to speak, the thought and feeling of the average union member, the one who comes only to an occasional meeting and who is active only in times of crisis. This is not an easy job, and it may prove to be an impossible one if attempted by the union alone. But it is the fundamental job.

Of all the consequences of the unionization of Negro auto workers, there is one that may eventually surpass in importance all the others. As a result of the mass adherence of Negro workers to the UAW, important changes have taken place in the social structure of Detroit's Negro community. The Negro middle class as well as the Negro ministers and politicians have begun to show signs of independence. This makes for greater independence of the Negro community *vis à vis* the city as a whole. And within the Negro community, its middle class no longer commands the undisputed intellectual and political leadership over Negro workers it once did. The Reverend Horace White, Negro minister, has remarked that "the CIO has usurped moral leadership in the [Negro] community." It is on this rising and striking figure—the self-confident, experienced Negro UAW leader—that much of the future of both the union and the Negro community will depend.

FROM THE AMERICAN SCENE

BY THE WATERS OF THE GRAND CONCOURSE

Where Jewishness is Free of Compulsion

ISA KAPP

A NEW YORKER without too strict a sense of order and tradition can find all sorts of amiable places to live in the reasonable confusion of Manhattan. But it is true, and I suppose anyone with a spark of discrimination would find it disturbing, that many of these places have no real character of their own—no particularity in architecture, in smell, in accent. Even those groups of streets that pretend to be neighborhoods—West End, 86th Street, Third Avenue, Riverside Drive—can show only a few blocks that belong together. At any minute a cross street, an elevated structure, a small walking bridge can crash into the unity: at once there is a new tone, new manners. One can of course find a kind of impersonal purity in the thoroughfares, Park, Fifth Avenue, but only negatively, as in the walls of a bank, which also exercise discipline upon money.

Unique, consistent character has to be sought in the more parochial boroughs of

THE outward appearance and cultural artifacts of the West Bronx were described by Ruth Glazer in "West Bronx: Food, Shelter, and Clothing," in the JUNE COMMENTARY. Here ISA KAPP takes up its soul, or, as it would be referred to by anthropologists, its non-material culture. Miss Kapp has previously appeared in this magazine as a book reviewer, and she has written reviews also for the *New York Times Book Review*, the *Quarterly Review of Literature*, *Kenyon Review*, and the *New Leader*. She was born in Brest-Litovsk, came to this country at the age of four, and has studied at Hunter College and Columbia University.

the city. At the threshold of the Bronx, just past a miniature Negro slum and the Cardinal Hayes High School, there immediately emerges a Jewish community as dense, traditional, and possessive as William Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha County, and through it flows a great middle-class river, the Grand Concourse. There is no mistaking even its inlets and tributaries: the waters that seep over from the evergreened fountained courtyard of the Roosevelt Apartments to the modest tan brick of Morris Avenue carry an irrepressible *élan*, a flood of self-indulgence and bountiful vitality, vulgar and promiscuous, withal, luxuriant and pleasurable.

The assumption has taken root in the Jewish West Bronx that all satisfactions of palate, of vanity, and of intellect are attainable. You can be prepared to hear that the garage-owner's family, having shopped for ten years at Klein's and the A&P, will one day go off for a summer trip to Europe, buy a two-family house in a quiet residential district, sell the house at a profit and move, when the fever strikes, to California. The dress-manufacturer's son naturally gets his MD, specializes; the daughter becomes a psychiatric social worker. To confirm their faith in themselves, and in America's promises, they become conspicuous consumers of silver foxes, simultaneously of learning, gift-shop monstrosities, liberal causes, and Gargantuan pastries. A generous, expansive life! At the same time, a life utterly without taste. The rugs are too heavy, the spirit of the Jewish holiday is kept alive by fur pieces, the frame is always more expensive than the picture.

Still, all purchases breathe an air of not being final, of expecting to be traded in in a few years, and this is, in spite of waste, a hopeful sign. For, in effect, the vulgar, predictable middle-class homogeneity is infinitely mobile, transformable, and energetic. We will come to see that the self-contained stable society of the Grand Concourse makes concessions to its anarchists as well as its snobs, and in either case, to the human need for individuation.

Take that area of gratification, Fordham Road. From the vertigo of the crossroads where thousands realize the deep satisfactions of getting the \$1.98 article for \$1.89 in Alexander's, and finding a creamier éclair at Sutter's, it is possible to escape, four blocks south, to a theater which was among the first in New York to devote itself to foreign-language films, Yiddish, French, recently Italian. Mongrelized by its ambivalent cultural surroundings, the little Ascot tried to be refined (was a pioneer in serving coffee in the lounge), avant-garde-ish (flung a bold challenge at the American dream that was daily unreeled under the Waterman's Ink star-spangled skies of the Loew's Paradise), and non-commercial (you could go there and constitute an audience of one). On the other hand, the RKO Fordham was the home of the heavy date, the initialled "blazer" and the DeWitt Clinton cap, red and black; while the scrawny, dilapidated University Theater played such old nostalgic pieces as *Scarface*, *Spitfire*, etc. It would not be fair to gloss over disparate elements in this borough of universities. Thus it must be revealed that there was a small inconspicuous house somewhat south of Fordham Road on which the signs announcing wining and dining were thought to be polite camouflage. I have never known anyone to exploit this inside knowledge, but the presence of such deception in the middle of the Grand Concourse lent a certain exoticism to what was in danger of becoming an oppressive neighborhood: just below was the region of medical care and funeral services.

ON 174th Street, the Concourse turns eastward, and at this rather grandiose juncture looms the one-dimensional steel security of the Medical Building. The Lewis Morris, once "restricted," now contains the offices of more than forty Jewish doctors and

dentists: in one building, a maternity hospital, several nose-and-throat specialists, heart men, internists, and so forth. The extravagant feeling of personal well-being is reinforced by the fact that this is no Manhattan office building, but an apartment house of two hundred Jewish families of means, in the heart of the West Bronx.

A relationship exists here between tenants and the door- and elevator-men (there are, or were, seven) that I have seen nowhere else in New York. The latter share entirely in the general house atmosphere of success and tolerance. They have a jauntiness and natural grace that seems to derive simply from ease, but then they go beyond this, to a quizzical cosmopolitanism, as though the crowding of so many urban Jewish professionals into their four elevators amused them. Every young man with glasses is hailed as professor, every adolescent female in a fur jacket presumed to be a model. The whimsy makes no apparent inroads on the complacency of the tenants, and no joke has ever been made at the expense of the elevator men, possibly because they are shrewd enough to know not only the collective but the special weaknesses of their riders, but possibly for less defensive reasons. A weak but truthful joke is told about the Negro maid in the Jewish household who answers the phone: "No, this isn't Mrs. Goldstein, this is the *shvartze*." The mark of a home where the exterior bad taste is at least neutralized, if not excused, by the interior warmth and fraternal feeling! A warm condescension is no longer wholly condescension: we call it benevolence.

One coterie in the Lewis Morris is more formal than the rest, gives in to the official nature of the house, methodically absorbs itself in its mail riding up in the elevator. But the ethos of the medical building, the real power, resides, not in such individualists, but in one of the most potent of American pressure groups, the circle of gregarious red-faced women who sit from May through October in the sunny enclosure that is reserved for them. Among the housewives who send their children to the Little Red School House, the High School of Music and Art, Columbia, even the Sorbonne, the dominant figure is that of the efficient young matron whose ambiguous expression means, I'm doing all right, the next coat is ordered,

the last insured. A smug, not happy face! What is the source of the dissatisfied look that is indigenous to all Grand Concourse housefronts? Perhaps the bile of neighborly competition, perhaps precisely the involuntary community of sunny afternoons, which emphasizes the sense in the participants that they suffer a continuous displacement, that their solidity ends up in the open air. For most of them, having been romanticists in the office and *femmes fatales* in the hospital corridors, are secretaries and nurses in their living rooms. Substituted for the glamorous paradoxical moment when the secretary lets down her hair, lowers the lights, and turns on Mozart, is the futile ritual of transporting the décor of business into the home. Above the baby carriage, a tailored suit slipped over the girdle, a flash of costume jewelry on a hot sidewalk. (You have to walk at least six blocks east to see a loose cotton dress that wrinkles.) The smug look is the memory of the certificate that meant escape from the office, the spleen that works the mouth is nostalgia for the boss. Their instincts asserted and their great expectations fulfilled, efficiency becomes incongruous. Their only audience is their neighbors. Three or four young matrons can always be seen together in an impersonal, distracted intimacy. In this sort of relationship, one can live for years without an exchange of vital favors: no onions borrowed, and no babies palmed off for the day.

The young mothers are never drudges; in this class, tradition forces grandmothers, if there is no part-time maid, to come and help out. These older women, the aggressive *bala-bustas*, sustain a different kind of continuous irritable gregariousness. In five minutes they find out how many rooms, how many children, troubles, what boy-friends, jobs, summer camps, how much education. As for them, they have a beautiful apartment, a talented younger daughter. If she were persistent, she could stand out among her friends in no time. Her son has a good position, his boss depends on him. They have land in Palestine, they picked out a good hill, they can retire comfortably in a few years. But the face above is stolid; no obligations on either side.

I HAVE already implied that the side streets of the Concourse can neither free them-

selves from its air nor from its values. At the same time, the Concourse borrows much of its essential spirit from them. The whole character of its self-image is bound up with its absolute middle position: in geography, as a concourse leading from the heat and dust of the warehouses at its southern tip to the cool impeccable suburbs at its north; in possibility, a concourse from Bathgate Avenue uptown to Park Avenue downtown. At any rate, going east on a side street, in the oval that faces Claremont Park, conversation has a style of its own. Here, above the counterpoint of baby carriages, we made our early distinctions between world revolution and socialism in one country, between the authentic Marxists and the petty-bourgeois opposition, and formulated the vocabulary of protest. On Eastburn Avenue we ate our first *homentashen* and were told that a small glass of homemade cherry wine helps to digest a heavy meal. Here also, in an empty lot, before the sprouting of the antiseptic Lebanon Hospital, you could see between the Concourse and Sheridan Avenue the only weeds, dandelions, ivies, and wild grasses in the West Bronx. On summer nights, portable radios, guitars, sandwiches were crowded into Claremont Park; and in the spring, a fellow picked up a girl by whistling a Beethoven quartet at her.

The Jewishness of the Grand Concourse, until recently a disorderly self-conscious phenomenon, also borrows some of its strength from the class below, the streets east, where rituals are accompanied by *esprit* and determination, and no one is vague about the forms. It is true that tradition is mainly invoked through the Jewish menu and the synagogue club, and probably with the most practical considerations in view. But the noticeable thing is the pleasure that exists in continuing Jewish habits. If the Grand Concourse draws upon 86th Street and Park Avenue for its *public* Zionism, its philanthropy, its flair for organization, it takes from those other streets on the East its *kugel*, its Friday candles, and its shrug of the shoulder. Influenced by opinion and taste from above and below, the Grand Concourse is in a sense cosmopolitanized. It has elements of classlessness, thus catholicity, and at the same time has the firmness, substantiality, and accrued culture of a definable class. It can both eat its cake and have it.

IT SEEMS to me very possible that the middle cultural position, unclear as its inclinations and its self-definitions are, provides the best breeding ground for Jews as human beings. As intellectuals, as artists, as social idealists, it gives them, certainly, a few hurdles to jump, but with characteristic generosity provides the time and money for training. To a child brought up on the Concourse, Judaism is simply part of his unconscious absorption of culture. The fact of being Jewish is accepted, but without the distinction of being Jewish. He is as innocent of martyric feeling as he is of racial peculiarity and, in most cases, of anti-Semitism. If one thinks in terms that try to impose a universal situation upon a particular person, there is, I suppose, a kind of inauthenticity in all this. Actually, though the Jewish child has not grasped the universal "real situation," he does understand his own situation, which is urban and disorganized and always subject to his own wit and inventiveness. In his case, there is to be no waiting for miracles.

He is, so far as I can see, entirely fortunate in having a free choice. Jewish manners, irony, music, intonation are in the atmosphere, and he can enjoy them either consciously or unconsciously. If he is to become a writer, let us say, it would perhaps be better for him to study the Talmud, to read Yiddish, to stay home Friday evenings, to absorb and be able to articulate a Jewish rhythm of living, as Catholic liturgies might, for example, be a very important source of a composer's invention. Since he is, for the most part, not to be a writer, but at the least to be an adult human being, the cultural vagueness in his environment cannot hurt him, cannot spoil his pleasure in discovering Judaism or the Hasidic tales a decade later. An Americanized inauthentic Jewish child, his confusion frees him. His possibilities are boundless, therefore he is more likely to bind himself in a meaningful way, to groups, to individuals, and to ideas.

THE Grand Concourse is very far from the ghetto, and possibly as far from the ghetto psychology as Jews can ever get. Here there is less pressure and anxiety (apart from actual conflict) than in the Palestinian Jewish state. Jewishness is not a calling, a fate, or a challenge, but a usable fact of life.

Jews set the norm of behavior, so, as Jews, they are under no social compulsions. As opposed to Palestinians, they are, as Jews, under no patriotic compulsions. Lacking perhaps the potentiality of unifying and giving form to their tradition, they gain the potentialities of diversity and disorganization. If Gentiles want to know individual Jews, this is the place where they can be known and can deny even such rational, analytical stereotypes as Sartre has constructed. The middle class here avoids Babbitry through continuous absorption of elements of discord. Undigested (but in urban life one learns to use even undigested elements), they initiate the ferment that creates a perpetual vivacity.

In the neighborhoods where Jewry has for many years been able to take its existence for granted, and to live an undefensive middle-class life, I think it is the older, European generation that has better exploited its freedom. We have seen in this generation a blurring of fanaticism, an adaptability, that is able to stand even the breaking away of its children. The latter, rigidly associating their homes with conservatism, parochialism, and repression, have been provincialized by their own revolt, sometimes going so far as to look for moderation and gentility in non-Jewish life only. They have been amazed years later to find their parents self-consciously "progressive," self-educated, wry, mannerly, and even, having got wind of modern psychology, embarrassingly over-considerate.

But what the children will never forgive their flexible parents are the stage sets of their childhood. The parent includes his home in a sweeping casual gesture of success, and then forgets about it; but to the child, the old rooms, the mirror that covers a whole wall, the painting that shows up well above the credenza, are like sore gums that he will never stop poking. The parent has resigned himself to his faith that public assertion of prosperity must come, in cities, at the expense of *Gemütlichkeit*. What Grand Concourse home knows anymore this European, pre-middle-class quality? The streets are lost to them. Instead they cultivate interiors, and the principle of display drives out the principle of pleasure. How many Concourse bedrooms are suffocated by flowered wallpaper, the *Kitsch* of domestic culture; how many windows blot-

ted out with venetian blinds, the somber instruments of urban privacy. The "living" room receives its sagging prop of barrel chairs, mahogany servers, cut crystals. In the spring, a housewife's fancy turns to chintz drapes with figures of birds and enormous roses.

Eccentric, spontaneous taste effaces itself before the dignified concept of a "set," that dreadful harmony of a single wood, a single century's notions. Between the 20's and the 40's, colors and lines may have changed, but the urge to unity remains. If through a whole apartment you notice, with slight variations, a disturbing relationship among all the lamps, you find out it was a deliberate maneuver: they are all "Japanese Modern." The mushroom-pink of the Degas sleeve "plays up" the mauve in the rug.

It becomes the extreme imaginative luxury to go from such homes into those where pieces of furniture are chosen singly, because of the limitation of money or because someone has been unreasonably lured by an odd shape or a pronounced grain of wood; to substitute for the heavy completeness of the Concourse even a capricious, uninformed vulgarity. But in the very atmosphere where possessions have come to mean so much and indicate so much, they are most impersonally acquired. The prepossessing family succumbs to the ultimate degradation of calling in the interior decorator (she gets a twenty-five percent discount on the fabrics) to match the drapes to the sofa ruffle, the kitchen oilcloth to the shelving.

BEHIND their massive pieces, these bourgeois are hard to confound. Ingenuousness is a quality they have lost. A kind of lumbering sophistication operates for them in sexual matters at well as in politics. Here, Marx is neither a shock nor a mystery, nor, to be sure, very much of a historic figure. So, too, this is perhaps the only kind of Jewish home in which jokes about virginity and contraception can be exchanged between fathers and daughters. Such early sophistication has, of course, very little to do with an attitude of simplicity or pleasure toward sexual experience. It assumes, on the contrary, the existence of insidious appetites which cannot be gratified. The joke,

in fact, lies precisely in the frustration. Out of the homes where the vocabulary of sexual banter is breezily absorbed and flaunted, come emancipated, excitable, prudish adolescents who are able to discuss "orgies of petting" in the most academic way, and to develop prejudices that strike midway between the stag dinner and the social worker's brochure. If the children finally come to think in a more natural way, the knowing parents then impose an implicit protocol of silence. The vocabulary for sexual enjoyment is sparse.

On the surface, the Concourse milieu would seem to be a natural enemy of the instincts, and of taste, but in practice it is, by the greater profusion of its minerals, and by its density, likelier ground for creativity than the looser, more conscientiously watered soil of Greenwich Village. In its aesthetic clutter, lies the potentiality of strong individual opinion. Where good taste is an assumption, as often as not, evasiveness is bred, and a tactful neutrality that is habitual and mechanical. In these homes on the Grand Concourse, tact has to be relearned, as does taste, thus there is no danger of relaxed alertness.

In spite of oppressive elements, the final effect of the middle-class home is not a stifling one. We must make a distinction between the suspicious hostility toward unfamiliar ideas and manners in the lower middle-class home, which is conservative, and the humorous condescension of the older generation's "You'll agree with me ten years from now" along the Grand Concourse. The first paralyzes, the second provokes. To the first you continue to make the irritable compulsive concessions that create inward hysteria; to the second, no concessions are possible, necessary, or seriously expected. In fact, left dissatisfied and unrealized by their work, rather than debilitated, Concourse parents seek and appreciate any kind of stimulation. They are challenged, rather than overawed or puzzled, by their children. It must be remembered that en route to the Grand Concourse apartment, they stopped off at one of the side-streets to the east. Therefore, ten years from now, if their children should really be ready to agree with them, chances are that *they* will be the ones to protest.

CEDARS OF LEBANON

THE WORLD TO COME AND THE LOVE OF GOD

Selections From the Mishneh Torah

MAIMONIDES

THESE two chapters, translated from the Hebrew by Shlomo Katz, are from the concluding section of the first book of Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*, written in 1180, ten years before his better known *Guide to the Perplexed*. The *Mishneh Torah* is a codification of Jewish belief and law in fourteen volumes, the purpose of which is to serve as a handbook (!) for Jews who do not have the time or ability to engage in the study of the Torah and Talmud. Yet for those who are interested in the mystery of Maimonides (was he a mystic, an atheist, confusedly Orthodox, or thoroughly Orthodox in a way we do not understand?), the *Mishneh Torah* is as important as the *Guide*.

The chapters printed here point to the heart of the problem. As a believing Jew, Maimonides affirmed the existence of a "world to come," that is, of heaven. As a student of Aristotle, he was an opponent of mythology and anthropo-

morphism. Consequently, in his description of the "world to come" he seems to be giving with one hand and taking back with the other. The "world to come" is inhabited by souls. But he also makes clear that "it is the intellect which is the human soul's specific form" (chapter 4 of *Mishneh Torah*) and that the "world to come" will not be established by the Messiah, whose function seems to be primarily the political redemption of Israel, but is already here though beyond our ken. So it would almost appear that the "world to come" is equivalent to the realm of true philosophic ideas as attained by the perfect intellect.

But the final chapter on the love of God, with its unmistakable passion and its binding of knowledge to love, indicates that if this is a philosophic re-working of Judaism, it is not philosophy as we know it. The mystery of Maimonides remains.—Ed.

Chapter VIII

THE good reserved for the righteous consists in life in the world to come, which is a life without death and good without evil. This is implied in the Scriptures where it is said: "In order that it may be well with thee and that thou mayest live many days" (Deut. 22:7). This has been understood by tradition: that it may be well with thee—in a world that is all good; that thou mayest live many days—in a life that is endless, and that is the hereafter.

The righteous will be rewarded in that they will merit bliss and be in it; the wicked will be punished in that they will not merit this life but will be cut off and will die.

Whoever does not merit this life [in the world to come] dies and will never come to life again, but is cut off in his wickedness and is lost like cattle. . . .

In the life hereafter there is neither body nor form, only the souls of the righteous without bodies, like the ministering angels. Since there are no bodies there is no eating or drinking or any of the things that human bodies require in this world, nor can there happen any of the things that occur to bodies in this world, such as sitting, standing, sleeping, dying, sadness, laughter, and the like. Thus it has been declared by the early sages that in the hereafter there is neither eating nor drinking nor marital intercourse, but only the righteous sitting, their crowns on their heads,

enjoying the light of the Divine Presence.

It should be evident that there are no bodies there since there is no eating and drinking. As for their saying "the righteous sitting," it was meant by way of illustration, that the souls of the righteous are there without toil or weariness. Similarly when they said "their crowns on their heads," they meant that the righteous are aware why they merited life hereafter and this knowledge is their crown. In a similar manner Solomon spoke of "the crown wherewith his mother crowned him" (Songs of Songs 3:11) and it was said "with everlasting joy upon their head" (Isaiah 35:10), yet joy is not corporeal that it could be placed upon the head and when the sages spoke of crowns they referred to knowledge.

By what was said concerning their enjoying the light of the Divine Presence was meant that they know and perceive the truth of God, something which they did not know in the darkness and the lowliness of the body.

Whenever the soul is mentioned in this connection it does not refer to the soul that is a requisite of the body, but that form of the spirit which is the knowledge that perceives more or less the Creator as well as other abstract concepts and things. This is the form whose essence we have explained in the fourth chapter of the Laws of the Fundamental Principles of the Torah and in this connection we call it soul.

Since this life is not attended by death, for death is an attribute of the body and there is no body in the hereafter, it is called the Bond of Life, as it is said "yet will the soul of my lord be bound in the bond of life with the Lord thy God and the soul of thy enemies will He hurl away" (Sam. I 25:29). This is the reward than which there is no higher, and the good which cannot be exceeded and which was the desire of all the prophets who metaphorically called it many names such as the mountain of the Lord and His holy place, the holy way, the courtyards of the Lord, the tent of the Lord, the pleasure of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the house of the Lord, the gate of the Lord, and the sages, speaking metaphorically of the good destined for the righteous, described it as a feast, but it is everywhere called the hereafter.

THE greatest retribution, than which there is no greater, is that a soul be cut off and not merit that life, as it is said "that person

shall be cut off, his iniquity is upon him." This is the loss which the prophets call the pit of destruction, perdition, flaming pit, leech, and other terms denoting extermination and destruction are applied to it, for after it there is no resurgence and this loss can never be rewon.

Perhaps you hold this good lightly and imagine that there is no other reward for fulfilling the commandments and for man's walking faithfully in the ways of truth except that he eat and drink good foods, have intercourse with beautiful shapes, dress in garments of linen and embroidery, dwell in ivory palaces, use dishes of silver and gold, and similar things as the foolish, silly, and dissolute Arabs think.

But the sages and men of knowledge knew that all these are senseless and meaningless things in which there is no hope, and they are only esteemed a great boon in our midst in this world because we possess body and shape, and all these things are desired by the body, but the soul desires them not, except insofar as they are needed by the body for its gratification and well being. But since there is no body there [in the hereafter] all these things become void.

There is no way in this world of conceiving and knowing the great bliss of the spirit in the hereafter, for in this world we know only the pleasures of the body and for these we yearn, but the other bliss is very great and cannot be compared to any of the pleasures of this world except metaphorically. . . .

The sages of old have already told us that man lacks the ability to comprehend thoroughly the bliss of the hereafter, and none knows its greatness and beauty and might except God alone, and that all the forms of bliss which the prophets of Israel have prophesied refer only to corporeal matters which Israel will enjoy in the days of Messiah when the kingdom will be restored to Israel.

But the bliss of the hereafter is incomparable and unimaginable and was not described by the prophets lest they diminish it by their images. Hence Isaiah said: "Eye hath not seen beside thee, O God, what He prepareth for him that waiteth for Him" (Is. 64:3). That is, the bliss which the eye of the prophet has not seen, and none had seen it but God, was made by God for man who waits for Him. The sages have declared that all the prophets foretold only the days of Messiah,

but no eye beside that of God has seen the hereafter. That which the sages call the hereafter is called thus not because it is not in existence now and this world must perish and only then will come the hereafter. This is not so, for the hereafter is in existence now, as it is said "which Thou hast treasured up, which Thou hast wrought" (Psalms 31:19). It is called hereafter only because it comes to man after his life in this world where we exist in body and soul, and this one comes first.

Chapter X

MAN must not say: I will perform the commandments of the Torah and occupy myself with its wisdom in order that I obtain the blessings enumerated in the Torah or that I merit life hereafter, and I will avoid the transgressions against which the Torah warns in order that I be spared the curses written in the Torah or that I do not forfeit life hereafter.

It is not right to serve God in this manner, for he who serves in this wise does so out of fear, and this is not a virtue of prophets or wise men. Only the ignorant and women serve in this fashion and children who are trained to serve out of fear until their knowledge increases and they serve out of love.

One who serves out of love occupies himself with the study of the Torah and the fulfillment of its commandments, and walks in the paths of wisdom not because of any external matter in the world nor out of fear of evil consequences nor in order to inherit good rewards. Rather he practices truth because it is truth and in the end his reward is bound to come.

This is a very high state indeed and not every scholar attains it. It was the degree attained by Abraham whom God called "My Lover" because he served Him out of love only. This is also the degree ordered by God through Moses, for it is said: "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy might." (Deut. 6:5) When one loves God as one should he will at once observe all the commandments out of love.

What is the proper love? That one should love God with a great, exceeding, and mighty love until one's soul is bound up with the love of God and he dwells on it always like

a love-sick person whose mind is never free of love for the particular woman of whom he always thinks, sitting down and standing up, when eating and when drinking. Still greater should be the love of God in the hearts of those who love Him. . . .

The sages said further: The text "that delighteth greatly in his commandments" means that the commandments themselves, and not their reward, should be sought. The great scholars were in the habit of exhorting their more intelligent and understanding pupils: Be not like servants who minister to their master for the sake of receiving payment, be rather like servants working for their master without thought of reward. Because he is the master he deserves being served, that is, served out of love.

Whoever engages in the study of the Torah for the sake of a reward, or to avoid calamity, does so not for the sake of the Torah. He who studies the Torah not out of fear nor for the sake of reward, but only out of love for the Lord of the world, who commanded it, he engages in it for its own sake. And the sages said: One should always engage in the study of the Torah, even if one does so not for its own sake, for though studying it for ulterior motives, in time one will come to study it for its own sake.

Therefore, when one teaches children, women, or ignoramuses, one teaches them to serve out of fear and in anticipation of reward, until their knowledge increases and they become very wise, then one reveals to them this secret gradually and one accustoms them to this matter gently until they grasp it and know it and serve out of love.

It is known and certain that love of God does not enter man's heart until after he dwells on it properly all the time, and leaves all mundane matters aside, as it is commanded: "With all thy heart and with all thy soul." One loves Him according to the knowledge of Him. This love will be determined by the knowledge, be it little or much.

Man should therefore devote himself to learning and understanding the wisdom and the studies which acquaint him with his Maker, in accordance with his capacity to understand and to comprehend, as we have explained in the Laws of the Foundations of the Torah.

Blessed be the Merciful One who has aided us.

ON THE HORIZON

London 1949: Worm's Eye View

HAROLD ORLANSKY

I GIVE you a strictly worm's eye view of London, with no pretensions of raising my head an inch above the ground.

In fact, I am living in the basement of a bombed out house, formerly the mansion of Sir Henry G—. The dashboard outside the door says "Sir Henry's Bedroom" and "Sir Henry's Bath," and there are signs for Her Ladyship too. These were the servants' quarters—a long row of them. We have the front room, where the silver was once kept in a wall-sized safe that can't be opened since the bomb jarred its fittings. Behind that is a small room, then a very large one with a deep sink, then the kitchen, and tiled pantry, the dumbwaiter for lifting food to the airy denizens two, three, four, or five stories above and, beyond all this, and removed from the quiet noises of the park-lined street, the music room, walled with mirrors etched with violins and musical notes. This is only the basement, and it goes on this way floor by floor, getting grander all the way. Or it did, once. Today the rain comes down through five floors behind us, vandals have gutted the lead roofing and plumbing, the beams show charred in the ceiling, and the music room

HAROLD ORLANSKY has been in England for the past year on a Social Science Research Council fellowship, studying the establishment of a new English town. Mr. Orlansky is an anthropologist who earned his doctoral degree at Yale University. ALFRED WERNER, who here discusses the work of the artist Yankel Adler, has written book reviews and art criticism in many magazines here and abroad. Mr. Werner has lived in America for the past ten years. An exhibition of Yankel Adler's paintings is being held this month at the Jewish Museum in New York City.

is empty, its floor coated with fallen plaster, and its mirrors clouded or broken.

That's not the whole story of England today, though some Tories may think it is. I'm sure Sir Henry is living comfortably elsewhere, and the odd company of artists, majors, clarinet players, doctors, clerks, students (and, too briefly, a luscious Swedish model) who inherited his place are very happy here, thank you, and fortunate to have such quarters between Victoria Station and the Royal Albert Hall. But it's part of the story.

At this date it's no news that London was bombed, though I wonder how the Nazis ever found it under the fog *and* blackout. They say the Thames gave it away, and I can't blame the Thames. Imagine Astoria raised to the *nth* power, interminable reaches of suburbia; neatly packaged houses, garden plots, and smoke-manufacturing-from-soft-coal units in three million little homes, twelve million tidy rooms each with its fireplace and chimney pot: an empire's heart, in which the sun was never seen. Understandable if the river tired. Now this city is pockmarked from man's old disease, and few persons think it has developed any lasting immunity.

I have gone to two meetings, Hyde Park, bought *Freedom*, *Socialist Appeal*, and the *Socialist Leader*, had dinner with a member of the gentry at his moated 13th-century estate, brown ale with a genial anarchist who heats his room by burning disliked books, and twice lunched with an historian in government service, once at an Italian and once at a Chinese restaurant. The evidence is that English restaurant food is inedible, that rations from Tasmania, Argentina, and other exotic places only just keep the natives faintly alive, that alcohol has been taken out of beer and fantastic taxes placed on any drink in which it remains, that Conservative housewives drool uncontrollably over the ads in American magazines (*Life* is making

a big mistake by deleting domestic advertisements from its international edition), *but* that despite all these tribulations and many more than can be crammed into an over-stuffed sentence, there is not going to be a revolution. No one is even thinking of a revolution, aside from the professional ideologists of the Left (mind and nature being what they are, some people can always be found who are thinking of *anything*, from which perfectly innocent fact the hosts of unsuccessful messiahs seem to draw solace), and everyone is going about his life as much as possible as he did before the war.

THE stock explanation of the extraordinary *psychological* normality of the English, in the face of great material affliction, is the English character. The French, I am constantly told, would never put up with it: why ripping up the cobblestones on the Champs Elysées and throwing them at the police several times a year is as much a part of French character as taking an hour and three-quarters for lunch—and look at their black market!

Now, having been forced in the past to read most of the “scientific” literature on national character, and being of the opinion that it is mainly tripe, but still preserving my scientific objectivity (being nearsighted, I find this is best preserved by removing my eyeglasses), I took it as my duty to make a thorough investigation of the subject in the course of three weeks in Paris and three months in London.

I must confess that my first impressions overwhelmingly confirmed popular and scientific prejudices. Paris is wonderfully French. The Follies girls wear nothing where American girls wear doodads (I have yet to determine what English girls wear in these circumstances, but my hypothesis is woolen underwear); the motor and bicycle traffic is shamelessly libertine, so that an expert New York jaywalker (who crosses the streets of other cities contemptuously) is quite confounded by a few eccentric contraptions on a desolate boulevard (He does not realize how much his former skill owed to the predictability of mass-produced autos driven *in lane*. In Paris they have never heard of lanes; there an American car stands out like a bathtub at a soap-box derby.), and, before the spring flood of Americans

knocked the bottom out of the market, it was impossible to walk near the Opéra without being propositioned by a dozen *teeps* to do *bisnèss* in dollars, gasoline coupons, cigarettes, and other effluvia of tourists.

In London, contrariwise, though traffic goes the wrong way, propriety reigns supreme: John Queue Public lines up unprotestingly for the cinema (some people even queue for aesthetic reasons, not wanting to go in during the middle of a show), buses (After a parade, I have seen a self-organized queue two blocks long wait half an hour for a bus, with only a few persons at the tail deserting the collective enterprise for the Underground. Compare this performance with that of six persons waiting for a bus at Madison Avenue and 42nd Street.), ration books,* restaurants, groceries, newspapers, tobacco, and what not, with no pushing and no policing. There is no black market outside the American Express office in Haymarket.

The customs officials *will not* be bribed, and a Labor MP was recently bounced for accepting some schnapps from a too oily operator. An abundance of lengthy notices and regulations in public places direct the patient masses to appointed ways and paths (and Norwegians receive stares for talking loudly in a subway car, and Americans receive glares for going down an empty “Up” staircase when the “Down” one is crowded). The subway conductor leans out from his station at the end of the car to see that nobody is decapitated when he closes the doors, and at 10 AM and at 4 PM he presses with his left hand while holding a cup of tea with the right. The clerks who work in the City arrive punctiliously each morning like ballet dancers in homburg or derby, black jacket, stiff white collar, pin-striped pants, walking stick, gloves, and the *Times*, and you should see the pink robe and furred helmet of the gentlemen in the foyer of the Bank of England. It is “cheerio” (or even, I shudder to repeat, “cheerie-bee”), the “Royal” mail, “bahstard,” and “bloody.” In short, England is deplorably *English*. Even the slovenly brats in the slums talk with an English accent.

*It is encouraging to note, however, that whereas in 1944, 527,000 persons lost their ration books and in 1947 1,054,000, currently they are being lost at the rate of 100,000 a month.

THIS, I repeat, was my first impression, and I could have written a book on the basis of it at least as scholarly as Gorer's *American People*. But, as Herbert Spencer relates, "There is a story . . . of a Frenchman who, having been three weeks here, proposed to write a book on England; who, after three months, found that he was not quite ready; and who, after three years, concluded that he knew nothing about it." My subsequent impressions have confused me.

Take the matter of printed notices. True, they surround you, you can't escape them even in the public toilet where, at a moment which, in the most raucous state in the Union, would be sacrosanct, a scroll of notices unrolls: "And now, please, wash your hands." Mass-Observation sociologists, however, report that almost nobody pays any attention to notices and instructions—especially official ones. Thus, during the war, an intensive government poster campaign exhorted people "When walking after dark tonight, For safety's sake wear something WHITE"; but Mass-Observation found that "From the beginning to the end of the campaign there was no appreciable improvement whatever and during the whole period an average of only one person in a thousand was wearing a white arm-band after dark in London."

Elsewhere, Mass-Observation publishes the treasonable information that football pools occupy the attention of half the adult population, that "devotees of jazz outnumber many times to one those who have the slightest awareness of Beethoven or Mozart," and that "Britain is predominantly populated by readers of 2d. bloods and sensational stories, who never think about Shakespeare." They add: "This is not of course a peculiar characteristic of Britain." But what, then, remains of our unique British Character?

As for the queues, after a while you will begin to observe the most un-British conduct creeping in. True, people queue for buses, and there can be no experience more destructive of American individualism than to be late for an appointment and yet constrained to keep your feet still and assume an air of imperious unconcern at the end of an endless queue; but when the bus heaves into sight, the ranks break and it is each man for himself and trample the weak underfoot, just like back home. Indeed, the *Times* pub-

lished a complaint the other day that Parisians treat disabled war veterans more considerately in local transportation than do Londoners (in the Paris métro special seats are reserved for *mutilés* and *femmes enceintes*—which may be why the French birthrate has recently broken all 20th-century records). The anxious speed with which natives rush to and from work and jostle each other in crowded places is refreshingly reminiscent of New York.

On the always interesting subject of sex, it appears that the English gentleman still retains the gentlest thoughts of the English gentlewoman. The *Sunday Times* wants to ban Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead* because "No decent man could leave it lying about the house, or know without shame that his womenfolk were reading it." But "surgical rubberwear" and "hygienic goods" are advertised and sold as openly as can-openers in special stores concentrated, appropriately enough, throughout the amusement area; and the Register-General reported a few years back that "one-seventh of all the children now born in this country are products of extra-marital conceptions, or . . . nearly 30 per cent of all mothers today conceive their first borns out of wedlock." On the streets, women of all classes walk about as unhampered as are the French by the American female's stays and structural steelwork. The breeze is practically Latin. In evening hours, the painted women bargain openly with their clients along Shaftesbury Avenue and Picadilly; their business prospers, perhaps, because it is one of the few not regulated by the Board of Trade.

As for the black market, there is more of that than quickly meets the eye. As in France, the grocer and butcher wield new powers, and dispense them in accordance with the inducement. An extortionist rent racket thrived quite openly until recently obliged by law to adopt various disguises, and before the end of clothes rationing there was a widespread traffic in coupons. Warren Street is said to be the ground of an automobile black market and, of course, free trade in all goods flourishes in the cavernous 19th-century world which survives exuberantly in Whitechapel and the East End. Admittedly the black market has not assumed the same importance here as in France, but it is doubtful if National Character provides

the explanation. The *Economist* points out, for example, that "The whole structure of the French economy, with its excessive number of independent producers and distributors and its reliance on food deliveries from small farms instead of from concentrated and easily controllable imports, makes control far harder to exercise than in Britain." Again the dry voice of reason interrupts a soulful tune.

Dare we conclude that Englishmen are *human*, that they exist in history and economics, in a material world with material afflictions and satisfactions, and that the tea and the weather (beastly as both of them are) and all things nice do not suffice to establish a species which breeds true?

THIS report was begun in an idle moment several months ago, and set aside in the press of more serious matters. It obviously needs an end, and the history of my house in the interim may provide one.

It is now Summer. I moved into these quarters last November, and about the same time workers began the job of repairing the war damage (the flow of water from the roof was reported accurately enough above—it was months before they stopped that). For a while a vital hallway door carried the sign: PLEASE EXERCISE CAUTION—FLOOR MISSING OTHER SIDE OF THIS DOOR. Apparently this measure did not suffice, because the door was subsequently nailed shut. The workers had a three months' contract, but they still show no signs, portents, or intentions of finishing the job and, I believe, they have settled into a comfortable routine in which repairs will exactly match the rate of natural collapse. They have converted the music room into a cloak room and storage space for tools, and someone has chalked two large ships with smoking funnels on the wall. Each morning I am awakened by a horrible racket of hammering, crashing plaster, splintering boards, rattling buckets, and a cheerful voice singing "Buttons and Bows." Follows a long pause for tea; a brief and diminished din and bustle; an enormous interlude for lunch; and the short afternoon, punctuated by bouts of tea and song, is devoted to sweeping away the debris and restoring the house, at 4 PM, to the exact condition that existed in the morning.

The reconstruction of London does not proceed everywhere at this imperceptible pace, but the task is Herculean and the men who undertake it, let us agree, *are human*. The rubble has long been tidied away, but the ruins remain. Birds nest in rusted fireplaces hanging high on adjoining brick walls: the homes which they heated are gone. Crippled men putter along the streets in three-wheeled motorized chairs. Hyde Park cannon fire a Royal salute, and memories reverberate. The war is over, the war is with us. London is a fathomless world, gutted often and recouped. God knows which way its fortunes are now tending.

The Art of Yankel Adler

ALFRED WERNER

THE reception given by the New York critics to Yankel Adler's first show in America, at Knoedler's, in the fall of 1948, was rather cool, if not hostile. The pictures composing the show were, perhaps, not too well chosen, and in any case Adler's attempt to found a directly and violently emotional art on a cubist basis was calculated to puzzle the general run of New York critics. One reviewer damned some of his canvases with faint praise as "effective decoration," and called the rest "disagreeably mannered." Another, although admitting that Adler's work was intense and frightening, characterized him somewhat glibly as "a cross between the whimsical Klee and the powerful Picasso." Howard Devree of the *New York Times* did, however, concede to this Polish Jew a prominent place among those artists whose works best reflected the experience of the European upheaval. Adler's paintings reminded Mr. Devree of "something molten churned out from the dark places of the soul," and he said that "something of the Old Testament, of the majesty of Babylonian and Assyrian relief" came through the semi-abstract expression.

Now the Museum of Modern Art in New York has just acquired an important picture, "Two Rabbis," that Adler executed in 1942. As far as I know, it is the only thing of his in the possession of an American museum. A pattern of variously colored quadrangles bodies forth the heavily bearded faces of

two East European Jews sternly and sadly gazing at the spectator. One holds a piece of paper on which the word, *misericor* [dia], is written—a plea for pity. There is no need to explain, at least not in this magazine, the topical reference involved. The painting itself is perhaps not completely successful, but it does reveal the characteristic traits of Adler's last style.

A further opportunity to see Adler's art is now presented by a show of twenty-eight of his oils, gouaches, water colors, and drawings at the Jewish Museum in New York; this will run through October 3 and comprises several works that have not hitherto been seen publicly in America.

IT WAS only with great difficulty that I was able to get together any real information about Adler's life. His portrait, painted about twenty years ago by a German Jewish artist named Arthur Kaufmann, shows a lean, bony man with serious "Semitic" features and melancholy eyes. The artist, who succumbed to a heart attack in London on April 26, 1949, seems to have been a quiet, unobtrusive person, not much concerned with publicity and reluctant to give interviews or make public appearances. Born in Lodz, the Manchester of Poland, in 1895, he belonged to the same generation of Jewish artists as did Kisling, Soutine, and Mané Katz.

His father is said to have been a miller, and a very pious man who devoted much time to religious observances. Yankel (it is the Yiddish for Jacob), was the seventh of twelve children and, like Soutine, grew up in an atmosphere hostile to the plastic arts, yet began to draw at the tender age of six. But whereas Soutine, when he demonstrated his first interest in art, was thrashed by his father and had at the age of fourteen to run away from his native *shtetl* to attend art school in Vilna, Adler's father, although he sent his son to a *cheder* and for a time hoped that he might become a rabbi, did not put any obstacles in the lad's way when he at last declared his ambition to become an artist.

The information on Adler's early strivings is incomplete and contradictory. He is said to have occupied himself first with engraving; but when he later turned up at Barmen in the Rhineland it was to study painting

under Professor Gustav Wiethüchter. In 1912 he worked for a while as an engraver at the royal court in Belgrade, Serbia, but soon after returned to the Rhineland, where he settled in Duesseldorf. Reports of his whereabouts and activities during World War I are again contradictory. According to one source, Adler, being technically a Russian citizen, was interned in Germany. Another source claims that he was drafted into the Russian army but was soon captured by the Germans and spent the rest of the war as a military prisoner.

IT IS, however, an established fact that after 1918 he returned temporarily to his native country, where he exhibited his works in Lodz and Warsaw, and where he also produced a series of paintings on the Baal Shem theme. At that time he was in contact with the poet, Moses Broderson, a book of whose poems, *Shvartz Shabbes* (on the recent pogrom in the Ukraine), he illustrated with expressionistic woodcuts, and with whom he edited a literary and art magazine, *Yung Yiddish*.

Restless by nature, Adler never stayed long in one place. But during the better part of the Weimar Republic period in Germany he had his permanent home in Duesseldorf, a city with an artistic tradition and with artistic aspirations. There he was commissioned to make a number of frescoes. During this time he also made trips to Paris, Mallorca, and Spain proper. Recognition came in time. His genius was praised by Martin Buber, who was moved by Adler's Hasidic strain, and by Sholem Asch, who found in him the same intensity as in El Greco. Articles about him appeared in leading German art periodicals as well as in Poland's great Yiddish weekly, *Literarische Bleter*. At a Duesseldorf exhibition he was awarded a gold medal, and the German government included some of his works in a group of contemporary German paintings circulated in Latin America.

Appointed to a teaching position with the Duesseldorf Staatliche Kunstakademie, Adler there became a colleague and friend of Paul Klee. The young man formed a great attachment for the Swiss artist, who was sixteen years his senior and had a studio on the same floor in the Akademie building. Around that time Adler also met the surrealist painter

and sculptor, Max Ernst. Those were years of hard work, but also of increasing success. But in 1933 Adler lost his post with the advent of the Hitler regime. In that same year he saw with his own eyes how a Jew was forced into a sack and thrown into the Rhine! Later, his works were honored by inclusion in Hitler's exhibitions of "degenerate" art.

Adler went to Paris, where he arrived almost penniless. He worked hard in the French capital and made journeys that took him to several countries, including the Soviet Union. Despite its official or semi-official anti-Semitism, his native Poland had Adler's paintings repatriated from Duesseldorf, and they were exhibited in Warsaw, with the artist himself attending, in 1935. Then, in the years just before the outbreak of World War II, Adler took up his residence in Cagnes-sur-Mer, on the French Riviera, where Renoir had painted. Of the paintings he made and left in Cagnes, many were irretrievably lost during the war.

In 1939 he volunteered for service with the Polish army units in France, and he was among the soldiers who were evacuated from Dunkirk to Scotland in the summer of 1940. Demobilized, Adler spent the remaining nine years of his life first in Glasgow, then in London, gaining a foothold in British art circles and influencing important members of the latest generation of British painters such as Colquhoun and MacBryde. As Denys Sutton has said, this last fact gave him practically the status of a *chef d'école*. In time he was hailed as a great and original painter by such an authority as Herbert Read.

AMONG all the artists he knew, Klee seems to have been closest to him. Eulogizing his friend, who died in 1940, Adler wrote in *Horizon* in October 1942:

"Klee made the background which reflects the intricate moving of our different lives. Here in the quivering of a leaf he experienced the violence of a thunderstorm. Sometimes it would seem that his pictures extend to the other side of the canvas. We connect with his pictures not only with our eyes, but our whole skin becomes a sensitive surface of eyes. We become the awareness of the barometer. Our sensibilities have been buried by the waste products of this life. Klee

took those crippled senses back to the air and the light."

These lines are significant, for they reveal Adler himself just as much as they characterize his mentor. Klee had a considerable influence on him, but he never moved as far away from the reproduction of nature as Klee himself did. The latter is, in general, lighter, more poetic, more melodious, and less cerebral than the Polish Jew. Klee fills you with *joie de vivre*, his paintings are of the kind you'd wish to "live with," whereas Adler's work is earthy, heavy, somber, reminding you, whatever the subject he chose, of a Jew's burden in the crazy and brutal 20th century.

It is fairly easy to detect the "influences" in Adler's work of Picasso and Braque too. But if there is a great artist among his contemporaries to whom Adler is essentially related, he is not to be found among the producers of nearly or purely abstract art, but only among the Expressionists. Superficially, Chaim Soutine and Yankel Adler would seem to have little in common. But take another look at their pictures—and then the differences between them appear to be limited simply to the different ways they had of reacting to pain. Soutine's world is that of bleeding, twisted flesh; Adler reminds us of the horror that must have come into the eyes of Lot's wife when, disobeying the angel, she looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt. Soutine used almost orgiastically strong colors and Adler, too, seems to have squeezed tube color right onto the canvas. But Adler, unlike Soutine, was not devoid of a consciously healing philosophy. If Franz Kafka was a "realistic writer of myths," Adler, the Hasid, decorated a church of his own with stained-glass windows that showed rabbis and Jewish soldiers and also women and still-lives inhabiting a world that resembled the outer world yet was not identical with it. Just as Kafka escaped from the tyranny of the world-maker by becoming his own demiurge, so Adler thrust his colors on canvas to make a timeless mirror of this hateful and mortal world, but a mirror more permanent and satisfying, because outside nature, than that which it reflected. Soutine ran away from Judaism—Adler, who lived chiefly in large cities of the West, had his most real and most constant existence in the very heart of Judaism.

THOSE who still seek "pretty" reproductions of nature will be repelled perhaps by the "untruthfulness" of Adler's canvases. Those, however, who realize that life goes on under the surface of outward appearances will, with Herbert Read, agree on how well and how often Adler was able to pierce through the "epidermis" of matter and attain to that more substantial life. Quoting Martin Buber's dictum that "It lies with yourself how much of the immeasurable becomes reality to you," Read pointed out that Adler's was an intuitive world in which "means and comparison have disappeared." He warned the onlooker against expecting this intuitive world to sustain him in life: "It only helps you to glimpse eternity."

Adler did not fully succeed in the task he set himself. Sitting rather uncomfortably

somewhere on the borderline between abstraction and representation, he was, at times, unable to reconcile the extremes. At times we feel that he wanted to express too much on one canvas—and remained frighteningly silent, his lips trembling and his eyes wide open in mortal fear. But he must be given credit for having tried—harder than most 20th-century artists—to penetrate to the deeper significance of men and things. He was not an imitator, but a real person. What he once wrote about Klee can be fully applied to himself:

"He had the courage to walk this clean-swept platform of the 20th century and not to continue in the shades of Renaissance standards. He did not try to make a new shadow. He made a survey of this place for others who will come."

A SONG OF DEGREES

HOWARD NEMEROV

THOUGH the road lead nowhere
I have followed the road
In its blind turnings, its descents
And the long levels where the emptiness
 ahead
Is inescapably seen.

I have cried for justice, I have cried
For mercy, now I desire neither.
A man may grow strong in his wandering,
His foot as strong as a wheel
Turning the endless road.

Foot and hand hardened to horn,
Nose but a hook of bone, eyes
Not liquid now but stone—I
To myself violent, fiercely exult
In Zion everywhere.

HOWARD NEMEROV is the author of a volume of poems, *The Image and the Law* (Holt 1947), and a novel, *The Melodramatists* (Random House 1949). Mr. Nemerov was born in New York City in 1920. He received his BA degree from Harvard University and is at present teaching at Bennington College. A new collection of his poetry is to be brought out by Random House early next year.

THE STUDY OF MAN

THE NEW ANTHROPOLOGY AND ITS AMBITIONS

The Science of Man in Messianic Dress

ROBERT ENDLEMAN

THERE is a New Look in anthropology, that omnibus "science of man." Time was when anthropologists were strange ducks who busied themselves with all the odd bits and ends of human affairs and history that respectable scholars turned up their noses at—the strange tribes of "savages" at the outposts of the world, scraps of pottery and other rubble from the meager remains of past centuries. They measured skulls and sacroiliacs, and ingeniously reconstructed the contacts and peregrinations of peoples long since vanished from the face of the earth. They collected and stored up vast arrays of exotic specimens of the long ago and far away. They theorized, discovering the origins of institutions like the family, or of human culture generally, in one or another ancient people.

ANTHROPOLOGY, a discipline until recently limited to primitive peoples on the periphery of modern civilization, has recently excited some attention by researches and pronouncements indicating an ambition, not merely to study the great centers of civilization, but to act as an authoritative scientific guide on such major problems as international relations, war and peace, and the remaking of Germany and Japan. Here ROBERT ENDLEMAN traces the development of anthropology's new interests and aspirations, and subjects its present claims to some objective analysis. Mr. Endleman received his BA from the University of Toronto, and has done graduate work in anthropology and sociology at the University of Wisconsin and Harvard. Not long ago he spent some time in field research on American Indians in the Southwest United States. He was born in Sudbury, Ontario, Canada, in 1923.

Today we find anthropologists bent on a new tack: they are out to save the modern world. They concern themselves with international understanding, with administration of dependent and conquered peoples, with labor-management relations in industry, with racial conflict and strife. This was not an overnight metamorphosis. What brought the change?

THE 19th-century anthropologists—and many well into the 20th—were strongly influenced by the evolutionary hypothesis; they devoted much of their time and energy to pigeon-holing primitive peoples in categories marking the stages in the progress of human society and culture, to culminate in a grand universalist construction showing a direct line of ascent from the ancestral cave man to modern rational man.

With the early 20th century, however, came a reaction against ideas of single origins—of institutions or of culture in general—and single lines of cultural descent. A new historical anthropology sought to retrace the specific cultural history of specific areas of the world, on the basis of the meager evidence available, abandoning the grander efforts of evolutionist anthropology. About the same time, Franz Boas in America inaugurated the detailed factual study of the remnants of the primitive cultures of America, and established the now venerated tradition of "field work" as the *sine qua non* of the anthropologist. He and his students also ushered in the emphasis on the study of cultures as integrated systems, in which the parts have meaningful relations to each other, rather than as simply a collection of isolated traits.

A similar trend emerged in British anthro-

pology in the now well-known works of Bronislaw Malinowski on the natives of a group of islands in Northwest Melanesia, the Trobriands. Malinowski proclaimed himself a "functionalist" anthropologist. "Functionalism" was essentially a more polemical statement of the Boas attitude, that all parts of a culture had to be considered in relation to each other and to the whole of the culture seen as a unit functioning to maintain and reproduce itself. Malinowski carried this further to argue that all studies attempting to reconstruct the past of unrecorded societies are arid and worthless, that we can only study the primitives as they exist today, and that, since *all* features of their present-day life must have a function, there can be no such thing as a "survival"—a cultural form which once had a function but which no longer has one, and which historical anthropologists had used as clues to the past in their reconstruction of history. Functionalism rather hysterically rejected all historical studies in anthropology, the painstaking work of such men as A. L. Kroeber, Robert Lowie, Edward Sapir, A. V. Kidder, and Leslie Spier—who had given us a limited kind of historical reconstruction—as well as every brand of evolutionism.

Another branch of functionalism arose in England in the work of A. R. Radcliffe-Brown. This more refined version again emphasized the functioning of a present-day ongoing system, as contrasted with problems of historical reconstruction, but insisted less dogmatically on the necessary functional integration of every part of a culture. Consequently, these studies place more emphasis on social organization, systems of sanctions, rudimentary political organization, etc.

ALL these trends contributed to turning the attention of anthropologists from the primitives to the moderns. In America, Margaret Mead, one of Boas's students, was most influential in effecting the change. In the late 20's and early 30's Mead widely popularized much of the basic viewpoint of what we may call the New Anthropology: anthropology with a message, anthropology as the knowledge needed to reform the world.

Trained in the academic psychology of the early 20's, Mead turned to anthropology, under the tutorship of Boas, as the new source of answers to psychological problems. She saw the remaining "primitive" peoples of the world as a fast vanishing and irreplaceable laboratory

for the testing of psychological hypotheses. In an era of heated "heredity-versus-environment" controversy, she became the arch-environmentalist, and set about to demolish large-scale generalizations about human nature by bringing in the evidence about the human nature of people in the remote areas of the world. Mead also took up Boas's concept of culture as a total way of life whose aspects and phases are functionally related and internally consistent to each other, and extended it as the major explanatory tool for all human behavior.

These views were presented mainly in three monographs based on field trips to several South Sea islands. In *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928), she asked whether the storm and stress of adolescence, as familiar in modern America, was an inevitable biological bugaboo of man. The method was to find out if adolescents have the same psychological problems in some totally different culture. Her answer, using the findings on the adolescent girls of Samoa, was that culture makes all the difference. In America, it is a period of psychological upset; in Samoa, it is an easy and accepted transition period of free experimentation without conflicting choices and responsibilities. For Mead this knowledge is not merely academic. It is the knowledge we need to be able to solve our problems; the *raison d'être* of anthropology is now to understand and change ourselves, our own civilization. *Growing Up in New Guinea* (1930) was designed to teach harassed American parents a cross-cultural lesson in child-training. As the anthropological ally of progressive education, a Rousseauian with real rather than imaginary "unspoiled" peoples, Mead stressed that we can learn from an exotic culture what effects various aspects of our way of life have upon the growing child, and try, accordingly, to change the world in which the child grows up.

In *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* (1935), the third in the South Seas series, Mead tried to show that any temperamental differences between the sexes is entirely a product of culture, and has nothing to do with the innate biological equipment of men and women. This is neatly accomplished by finding, close to each other in New Guinea, three primitive tribes in which the temperamental distinctions are different from those of Western civilization, as well as from each other. In Arapesh, both men and women are gentle, unaggressive, "feminine," mothering; in Mundugumor, both are aggressive, violent, more "masculine"

by our standards; while the Tchambuli women are aggressive, violent, hostile, the Tchambuli men gentle, passive, unaggressive—Americans in reverse, as it were.

MARGARET MEAD has become American anthropology's chief emissary to the Western World, applying herself directly to the problems of child-rearing, adolescence, and sex differences which she had raised in these popular monographs, in such later works as *And Keep Your Powder Dry*, and scores of articles. But perhaps the most direct and solid link between anthropology as the study of the exotic primitive and anthropology and as the tool with which to attack the problems of modern society, was forged by another female student of Boas, the late Ruth Benedict.

Benedict's *Patterns of Culture* (1934) extended the Boas conception of culture as a meaningful, integrated unit to include the idea of a central pattern of psychology as characteristic of a culture, a pattern creating a distinct and unique flavor or ethos for each culture. She illustrated her theme by showing several vastly different primitive cultures each of which is (according to her portrayal) highly integrated around a particular way of looking at and feeling about the world; thus most of the Pueblo Indians are "Appollonian"—a "middle way"—in everything they do, while most of the Plains Indians are "Dionysian"—given to exotic extremes; the Kwakiutl of British Columbia are megalomaniac, and the Dobuans (neighbors of the Trobrianders in Melanesia) are paranoid to an amazing degree.

Coming into anthropology at a mature age from a literary career, Benedict brought an approach strongly influenced by Nietzsche and Spengler, and evidently by the German idealistic and intuitionistic tradition in general. Her conception of an over-all "pattern" of a culture is hardly more than a crude formulation of the *Geist* with which the German historians of the idealist tradition characterized a particular historical epoch. Benedict's anthropological relativism, in which there are no broad human generalizations, for each people is essentially distinctive and unique, is directly analogous to the historical relativism of these historians, except that she focuses on variations in space rather than in time, and emphasizes the multitude of primitive cultures discovered by anthropologists of a century past, rather than the large-scale civilizations of the world. This rela-

tivism focuses attention on the intensive study of the unique and individual. For the idealistic historian, it meant, besides the painstaking examination of the voluminous masses of documents of a civilization, the application of "understanding" (*Verstehen*), i.e. penetrating the essence of an epoch or a civilization by getting an intuitive "feeling" for its way of life; this was the great distinguishing feature of the disciplines of man and society (*Geisteswissenschaften*) as compared with the natural sciences (*Naturwissenschaften*). For the present-day anthropologist, the study of the unique and individual means "field work," an immediate and contemporary contact with the remnants of the primitives of the world, with practically no time depth whatsoever, for the past of these peoples is almost completely and irrevocably lost.

SO WE have the New Anthropology. Ethnology—historical reconstruction of the movements of the unrecorded peoples of the past, and generalizations about culture processes from these—is increasingly de-emphasized in the new generation of American anthropologists. Ethnography, i.e., just plain factual reporting (the Bella-Bella do this, the Bella-Kula do that), which has always been central to a discipline whose main subject matter has been disappearing from the earth more rapidly than investigators can get out to look at it, is also less emphasized today. The New Anthropology of Mead and Benedict and their followers has increasingly stressed the need for interpretive and theoretical approaches. An intuitionism, a watered-down *Verstehen* approach, is the end-product of Boas's emphasis on the integration of culture, and has become the most prominent feature in this anthropology's outlook on the world.

The latest stage has seen Mead and Benedict and other anthropologists—Geoffrey Gorer, Gregory Bateson, Clyde Kluckhohn, Ralph Linton, A. I. Hallowell, Weston La Barre, Cora Du Bois and others, with the help of psychiatrists like Abram Kardiner, Alexander and Dorothea Leighton, and Erik Homburger Erikson—combining Mead's emphasis on the patterns of child-rearing with Benedict's emphasis on "cultural ethos," and directing their efforts to exploring the relationships between these two.

With this outlook anthropology has staged a return from the native. For if the culture

concept and its newer derivatives revolving around the cultural ethos and the "modal" or "basic" personality (created by certain forms of child-rearing) have been such master tools in understanding the myriad exotic peoples of the world (the argument runs) why not turn back and apply them to the major civilizations of the contemporary world? In this new view, differences between peoples, the differences that lead to friction, hatred, violence and war, can be understood in large part as differences of culture, differences of ethos, of world view, and if only we can understand these differences, we can more easily move toward a solution of the problems of a troubled world.

This is a bold and sweeping claim, but it has been advanced in one form or another by leading anthropologists of the present generation.

Besides the anthropological works on community studies, race relations, industry, and colonial administration,* the significant work of anthropologists on modern life includes two sweeping essays on the American character by Margaret Mead and a British disciple, Geoffrey Gorer; studies of the Japanese by Benedict, Gorer, and LaBarre; anthropological work on *Postwar Germans* by David Rodnick. The rest of the nations of the world are now gradually being surveyed by anthropologists, with funds

*The community study approach, as used by W. Lloyd Warner and associates on Yankee City, and other small towns in the South and the Midwest, applies an anthropological method by treating a modern community either as though it were a complete self-contained society, or as though it were a microcosm of the larger industrial society. "Industrial anthropology"—the works of Whyte, Warner, Roethlisberger and many others—seeks to elucidate the differing cultural premises of managerial and worker groups, the lines of informal organization, and the failures of communications (hence of "understanding"). For critical analyses, see Daniel Bell, "Adjusting Men to Machines," *COMMENTARY*, January 1947; also Herbert Blumer, "Sociological Theory in Industrial Relations," *American Sociological Review*, June 1947; and Wilbert E. Moore, "Industrial Sociology—Status and Prospects," *American Sociological Review*, August 1948. The approach here is paralleled by that proposed by anthropologists in colonial administration: to study the culture of the subordinate peoples and to recognize and solve difficulties in understanding involved in implementing any given policy. Alexander Leighton's *The Governing of Men* employs fundamentally this position in studying the Japanese in American wartime concentration camps. See critique by Nathan Glazer, "Government by Manipulation," *COMMENTARY*, July 1946.

supplied by foundations and defense agencies. The Russian Research Center at Harvard is at work on Russian character and a group at Columbia headed first by Benedict, and since by Mead, has been studying the national character of various European groups, including the Jews.

MARGARET MEAD's *And Keep Your Powder Dry* (New York, Morrow, 1942) and Geoffrey Gorer's *The American People* (New York, Norton, 1948) are related in background and conception. Mead's book was a quickly written (six weeks) bit of wartime propaganda intended to elucidate the psychological background of the American way of life as it bore upon the pursuit of the war. She makes sweeping generalizations about the kind of family background typical Americans have—finding us all psychologically third-generation—and explicitly or implicitly assumes that most if not all Americans closely approximate the conditions and character features she describes, regardless of class, caste, ethnic extraction, regional or rural-urban differentiation, occupation, or any number of other social, economic, or political criteria for differentiation. Gorer's work is also severely vitiated by this kind of unabashed impressionism, drawing its material from informal travel in America, a study of movie themes, a case study of a schizophrenic, and personal contacts with American intellectuals at Yale, Columbia, and elsewhere. In both cases there is a distinct but unacknowledged Eastern-urbanite upper-middle-class bias which makes the broad generalizations of the authors scientifically suspect, to say the least.

Each tries to capture essential features of the ethos of the American people. For example, Mead tries to analyze American ethics of fighting by noting how the male child is taught that physical aggression is justified only on provocation from the outside, and then is positively exhorted. This, it appears, explains why America had to wait until Pearl Harbor before it could in all conscience fight the recent war. Gorer resorts to similar explanations: American food-anxieties, instilled in childhood not by actual alimentary want, but by parental complexes about feeding, "explain" why Americans resisted large-scale shipments of food to starving Europe during the early stages of the Marshall Plan; or the second-generation rejection of paternal authority "explains" the "fanatical hatred of Roosevelt and the New Deal among the most respected Americans."

Gorer has inevitably become the scapegoat for all manner of critics of this phase of the New Anthropology, including a defensive rejecting reaction by the more orthodox anthropologists themselves. Yet his extravagances are only extreme cases of a general trend. In his paper on Japanese character structure prepared for the War Department during the war ("Themes in Japanese Culture," *Transactions, New York Academy of Sciences*, Series II, Vol. 5, reprinted in Douglas Haring, ed., *Personal Character and Cultural Milieu, a Collection of Readings*, Syracuse University Press, 1948), he went so far as to attribute compulsiveness, sadism, and many other oddities and contradictions of the Japanese to severe toilet training. Similarly, the Japanese attack on Manila, which Gorer asserts emphasized cultural rather than military objectives, is partially "explained" by the analogy of the Japanese boy aggressively destroying his mother's elaborate hairdo whenever she is especially "weak" and "feminine" toward him. In this interesting thesis, the "feminine" American war record of early 1942 provoked this "masculine" Japanese response. (Gorer is undisturbed by criticism, as is evident from his recent interpretation of the Soviet Union in terms of the practice of swaddling!)

Other anthropologists who undertook to analyze modern Japan in the fever and rush of wartime assignments, without the benefit of the sacred anthropological field trip, have produced similar sweeping obiter dicta. Weston LaBarre emphasizes even more than Gorer an element of anal eroticism in the modern Japanese, responsible for a pervading compulsiveness in all social relations and an obsessive concern with status and rank. Similarly, in discussing the Chinese, LaBarre traces the acceptance by the Chinese of American intermediaries in the war against Japan to the Chinese pattern of using middlemen in arranging marriages ("Observations on the Orient," *Psychiatry*, 1946).

Again on Japan, Ruth Benedict's *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (1946) was an attempt to apply her conception of all-pervading patterns to modern Japan and elucidate the major features of the Japanese ethos. She is particularly concerned with their conceptions of ethics, and devotes most of her volume to the complexities of formalized and less formalized patterns of obligations which, by her account, pervade all Japanese life, and with the other major pre-occupation of the Japanese, that of

"finding one's proper place." Working under wartime handicaps, Benedict applied her intuitive approach to translated documentary materials, movies, the few historical works available in European languages she could handle, and interviews with Issei and Nissei interned in America. She seems to have been easily taken in by official Japanese propaganda, particularly on anything touching international politics and war. For example, she naively parrots official pronouncements to the effect that Japan's colonial expansion and her part in the recent war were merely part of her attempt to "find her proper place among the nations." It is one thing to use this document as a case example in the methods of Japanese war propaganda, noting the psychological assumptions behind the use of such a technique. It is quite another to accept this, as Benedict does, as an explanation of why Japan went to war!

ONE might well dismiss the anthropological character-structure approaches to modern nations as simply political naivety stemming from the treatment of large-scale societies as though they were small unindustrialized and cohesive tribal or folk populations. However, this is no mere academic oddity of misinterpretation. It takes on serious political relevance when it is presented as a mode of dealing with international affairs. This is done in all solemnity and with the stamp of professional erudition in Clyde Kluckhohn's prize-winning *Mirror for Man* (New York, Whittlesey House, 1949).

This book is in effect a manifesto of the New Anthropology, a science self-consciously announcing itself as mature and responsible. It has the merits of broad and sensitive scholarship uncluttered by compulsive academic qualifications, footnotes, and references, at the same time that it scorns the condescending oversimplification so characteristic of most "science for the marketplace." Significant sections of it bear directly—and more articulately than in the writings of possibly any other American anthropologist—on the relation of anthropology to modern affairs.

While Kluckhohn is defensively aware of some of the excesses committed by Mead and Gorer, and honestly confesses his own sketch on American culture to be "only a shade beyond impressionism," he is still no better able than the others to avoid the basic kind of simplification in political thinking to which the

very premises of the New Anthropology are almost bound to lead. For example, here is the theme of anthropology's contribution to world peace—war can be prevented if only we can increase understanding between peoples:

"The shrinking of the world makes mutual understanding and respect on the part of the peoples of the world imperative. . . . [As between the Soviet Union and the Western democracies] . . . even now there is common ground which could well be brought nearer the center of bitter political discussion. For example both the American people and the peoples of the Soviet Union are remarkable among the nations of the world for their faith in man's capacity to manipulate his environment and control his fate."

Such pronouncements reveal the fundamental fallacies of the approach. It is politically naive to assume that underlying differences or similarities of *world-view* between whole politically-organized populations are the root cause for conflict or the prevention of it. The emphasis, particularly in American anthropology, on culture as the master analytic rubric, has led here to a systematic neglect of systems of social organization, group differentiations, significant hierarchical relationships, conflicting economic and political interests, and, very crucially for the present case, the way governments gain and exercise their powers. Such a concentration on culture incapacitates the thinker for any analysis of the amenability of a social system to certain major types of change, not merely in personnel, but in essential structure. Though all these politically important features are *theoretically* within the purview of the cultural anthropologist, in point of fact they are flagrantly neglected or distorted.

In effect, the complex of a nation's institutions is reduced to a cultural abstraction. Oddly enough, this permits anthropologists to consider change and reconstruction either deceptively easy or impossibly hazardous. On the one hand, one is told one need only root out one cultural pattern—such as strict toilet training—to transform the political character of a nation. On the other hand, one is warned that apparently minor changes may have the most devastating and far-reaching effects.

The New Anthropology falsely exaggerates and distorts the relevance of the thinking and feeling of the populations of modern states to the making of war or peace. It seems to swallow whole the American democratic mythology

that the opinions of the individuals of a society are added up to determine their political destinies—and then applies this not only to America but also to totalitarian states! It also assumes that power politics—not to mention economic ramifications—is only "one aspect among many" in international conflict, instead of being the crucial point at which the balance is ever tipped between peace and war. One need only inquire about concrete techniques of communicating with the masses of the Soviet states, in an effort to bring them the anthropological light of how much we have in common, to be faced abruptly with the role of power structure in the modern world. The anthropologists might take note of Harold Lasswell's terse reminder, in his recent *Power and Personality* (Norton, 1948):

"Now you and I may dissent from the conception of an inevitable war. But what if we do? . . . There is no simple method by which power holders in the name of this particular myth can be quickly reached and persuaded of error. Mr. Stalin and the Politburo are not coming to seminars in history, political science, and psychology conducted by a 'bourgeois' scholar."

TO BE sure, a consideration of the ethos of a people and of their character structure is not entirely irrelevant for understanding modern populations, nor is a "holistic" (all-embracing and unifying) view of a people impossible to achieve. Undeniably, the psychological backgrounds of political behavior are a significant field for present-day researches. But, as currently practiced, anthropological (and psychiatric) impressionism reveals itself as woefully inadequate for the task.

The scope of this inadequacy may be gauged by reviewing the intellectual orientations of the New Anthropology. Prominent is the neglect and often profound ignorance of history. Derived originally from the necessity of immediate studies of unrecorded and disappearing peoples, this approach has been fantastically carried over into areas where documentary records and a considerable body of scholarship exist. Another obvious error is the neglect of factors of power and prestige stratification: it is here that the most fruitful work could be done, by breaking down emotional and ideological backgrounds in terms of *who* feels how and *who* thinks what, and by measuring the political incidence of such differentiations.

Also relevant is the essentially *American* quality of the New Anthropology. This has meant the predominance of "culture patterns," "themes," personality studies, and impressionistic generalizations about culture, in contrast, for example, to current British anthropology, which is mainly social anthropology in the Radcliffe-Brown tradition, interested primarily in comparative social systems and not in personality structures. It is interesting to observe that the two major British proponents of the New Anthropology—Gregory Bateson and Geoffrey Gorer—have both been attracted to America, and that neither has been involved in standard British anthropology studies. One might also note Malinowski's coming to America in his last years, as being consistent with his greater emphasis on culture and its necessary integration, rather than on social organization and differentiation: a case in point is his last work, *Dynamics of Culture Change*, where he handles the problems of African native workers in British-controlled mining areas as a question of the meeting of two cultures, and the development of a third new one at the point of contact. This emphasis—the typical point of departure of anthropological studies in acculturation—obscures an essential feature of the situation, that of domination and exploitation of a politically subordinate people by techniques of economic power familiar throughout the world.

We may ask whether the American democratic mythos has not influenced the New Anthropology, not only in its conceptions of political ideology, but also in a general predisposition to portray a homogeneous and uniform mentality and psychology for an entire social group. It would be rather ironic if anthropologists, who have proclaimed so loudly the detached approach—the cultural relativism and freedom from all preconceptions—that they bring to the study of their own culture on the basis of having studied other cultures, had been unwittingly victimized by the American mythology of classlessness in their approach to the modern world and primitive cultures as well.

THE anthropologists' return from the primitive is in part an outcome of a concern with general human values that has become a widespread phenomenon in contemporary social studies, particularly since the advent of the Bomb. The phase of crass positivistic empiricism in sociology is beginning to give way.

With its global concerns, the New Anthropology is prominent in this tendency. This is a significant change from the *Patterns of Culture* period, a scant fifteen years ago. Benedict's approach left the anthropologists with an almost complete ethical, as well as anthropological, relativism: the "good" and the "normal" were left to be defined each only in the context of its own culture. To the New Anthropologists—as to social thinkers of various disciplines—this is an unbearable situation, and we are witnessing a stampede in the direction of some solid foundation of life and thought, some kind of ultimate values.

In the New Anthropology, the universal breadth of knowledge acquired by the science of man is now applied, not, as in *Patterns of Culture*, for an iconoclastic shattering of our own ethnocentric ethical conceptions, but rather as the source from which we may scientifically derive ultimate values themselves. This position is most consciously delineated by Kluckhohn in *Mirror for Man*. The argument is roughly as follows: The diversity of culture is not really infinite, as earlier anthropologists thought. Some values are found in all known cultures. These, to be sure, are very broad, and some are only negatively formulated, e.g., no known culture has ever valued human suffering as an end in itself. Nevertheless (the argument runs), since some values have been empirically discovered in every known culture, there must be some pan-human logic in them, which makes them an imperative for all human existence. These then must be universal values, ethical absolutes, which no society, no culture that we might try to shape for ourselves through rational action, can afford to neglect.

In this case, an admirable humanistic concern has led to intellectual confusion. No one will deplore the appearance of ethical philosophers, no matter how unlikely the field in which they appear, or say they have nothing to offer us. But the ethical pronouncements of sociologists, psychoanalysts, poets, historians, or anthropologists, cannot be paraded as "science." It is one thing to persuade men to use the best of our contemporary knowledge about mankind in thinking about ethics. It is quite another to assert that our empirical knowledge of values can provide us with the ethics itself, in any simple, wholesale, *scientifically authoritative* way. In any case, empirically universal values derived by anthropologists, are likely to be so broad that they can rarely hope to be relevant in

any concrete political or ethical situation. We may grant as an anthropological generalization that in every society there is always some form of normatively sanctioned sexual relationship; but this generalization cannot tell us which form to choose for any particular society.

The political-ethical view the anthropologists propound is essentially Western-European humanism deriving mainly from the Enlightenment, and broadened by the kind of tolerance for differences developed by the anthropologist in living among his favorite exotic folk society. For all the talk of ultimate values, the most important values they recognize are not universal at all, but are rather those of the anthropologists' particular subvariety of our own Western culture. Scientific honesty should compel the recognition that these are *our* values, and that we can hardly expect them to be shared unless our goal is something like a Pax Americana in which we are really trying to make over the world in our own image.

AN ANTHROPOLOGISTS reviewing Stuart Chase's uncritical and laudatory book on the social sciences, *The Proper Study of Mankind*, says that "Mr. Chase is less naive, but still reminiscent of the prominent physician who acknowledged in wistful seriousness an introduction to an anthropologist: 'Ah yes! You are an anthropologist—one of the only group of men who might be trusted with power to rule!'" Though cited in this case with tongue in cheek, it would not be hard to find anthropologists—and sociologists, social psychologists, and social psychiatrists of various persuasions—who agreed wholeheartedly with this image of themselves.

We may well ask what is the actual and prospective role of the New Anthropology in the present world of affairs? Certainly many anthropologists of the new dispensation are already at the disposal of governments and non-governmental bodies, in the capacity of "experts," along with the legal, economic, statistical, and sociological technicians. As though intoxicated by their new proximity to, and supposed influence on, social power, these academicians now inflate their chests and claim to have—now or ultimately—the answers for all manner of problems ranging from railway coach seats designed to accommodate every conceivable type of human bottom, to the preservation of international peace.

This self-congratulation, however, is very largely *intra academia*, and it would be foolish

to conclude that the social scientists' articulateness about their role in political affairs coincides with the actual influence they wield. Distrust of the "longhairs" by practical politicians is inherent in the very nature of political action, which cannot tolerate to be sicklied o'er by the pale cast of thought, and which often finds the "rational" solution politically inexpedient. To date, the practical political influence of the anthropologists (and a few other politicized branches of social science) has consisted of a somewhat awe-inspiring ability to extract large sums of money from the armed forces and related sources to continue more or less the same kind of research we have here described. It is most unlikely that Gorer's speculations on Russian character will be more useful than his speculations on the Japanese.

In all probability, then, the appearance of scholars in the world of politics augurs neither the panacea for all our ills that many expect, nor, on the other hand, any worse bungling of international affairs. It is probably more rewarding to view the New Anthropology itself, and the acceptance of its scientific claims in many sectors of American society, as an intriguing feature of current American culture and ideology. What is the function of its particular mythological view of the world, as compared with other current myths and folklore? To whom does the mythology appeal, what interests does it serve, what underlying sentiments does it set aglow, what anxieties allay? Would it not be proper to set one or two of the more intelligent New Anthropologists to work on the New Anthropology itself?

I do not argue that anthropological knowledge is worthless in understanding man and society, but that it is knowledge of a special sort, with its own special lacunae and blind-spots as well as advantages. It is not a substitute for, but must be brought into active collaboration with, the other social disciplines, especially where these have been concerned with problems of power, social organization, and change. Those who are sincerely concerned with mustering knowledge toward the solution of world problems, face the imposing necessity of discriminating the relative pertinence of different kinds of approaches, of different kinds of collaborations, for the illumination of specific kinds of problems. This also implies a humble and honest recognition of the inadequacy of the present state of our understanding of man and society.

LETTERS FROM READERS

Views on Middlemen

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Since the beginning of settled communities, or even earlier, the functions of the merchant or trader have been tangled with all manner of real problems. Does the trader perform a service worth the reward he harvests, or does he prosper by beating down the producer and loading excessive charges on the consumer? Is the foreign trader to be tolerated or should direct trade with the consumer, at least, be a privilege of the citizens? Is it socially desirable to have certain groups specialized in trading functions?

These are some of the real problems. In the July issue of COMMENTARY Abba Lerner presents a discussion of the position of the trader, whom he designates by the late term middleman. . . . Like all of Abba Lerner's writing, his "Myth of the Parasitic Middleman" is impeccable economics, and like all impeccable economics, is very bashful about making contact with the real problems. Abba Lerner's argument turns on the problem of the productiveness of trade. Is the merchant a producer, as the artisan and farmer are producers? Or must we leave the merchant in the old category of non-producers, along with doctor, lawyer, beggarman, thief?

Nobody cares whether we do or not. All mankind from the earliest times has known that the merchant is useful and worthy of his hire, if his hire is not excessive and corrupted by sharp practices. That is the real problem.

Look out for the trader. He will outwit you and "sell you a bill of goods." *Caveat emptor*. Is there anything strange in this nearly universal attitude? The trader is an expert; farmer and city consumer are amateurs. Can there be any doubt as to where the profit will fall?

Of course there have always been fair traders, as well as the sharpers. In the prairie states of my boyhood, as every reader of Veblen knows, the trading function was mainly monopolized by Yankees. They were very efficient in skinning the Indians and the farmers who like my own parents were immigrants. I saw enough of the Yankee procedures to become a middleman baiter, for life, if I had not had other problems to vex me.

If we had anything to sell the Yankee used all his arts to "Jew us down." If we wanted to buy anything he used his arts to raise the price higher. Strange, there was no such phrase current as "Jewing up."

This "Jewing" process went on blithely until the real Jews came into the community. Whether from an inherent sense of fairness, or from a farsighted view of the worth of friendly customers, the Jewish traders treated us decently. We liked them. Of course the Yankee traders hated them.

With the development of the one-price system—mainly a Jewish invention—the feeling against the trader as a sharper tended to die down in advanced communities. But there still remains the question of excessive margins. You can't make the farmer believe that collecting, pasteurizing, and delivering milk deserves a larger reward per quart than raising, feeding, housing, milking cows. He accepts wryly the sour explanation that milking the consumer is a nobler function than milking the cow.

The bulk of the trading done in the world is still of the ancient order of a contest of wits between professional and amateur. The professional is not loved, whether he be native or Yankee, Jew, Parsee, Armenian, Chinese. It is not healthy for a minority people to be too heavily specialized in this invidious walk of life. Pogroms against Jews, Parsees, Armenians, Chinese (in Indonesia) have smeared the pages of history with blood. There have been no pogroms as yet against Yankees, but the Yankees are new at the game, as history runs.

That is why I rejoice at every scrap of evidence that the Jews of America are extending themselves over wider and wider occupational circles. I rejoice in the fact that Jewish farmers make up almost as large a percentage of the Jewish population as Yankee farmers of the Yankee population. I feel like shaking the limy hand of every Jewish building worker I see, and I all but embraced the sootiest Jew I ever saw, emerging from a coal mine. Abba Lerner speaks scornfully of the leaders of Israel, who pride themselves on bringing Jews to the soil. In Heaven's name, could there be an Israel, an Israel of our dreams, if it were nothing but a trading colony planted on the Syrian coast?

All this has nothing to do with the essential soundness of Abba Lerner's economic defense of the middleman. . . . It is true that the mercantile function is one of extremely wide relations, making for human understanding and a sense of society as a whole. I can think of no other function that is equally educative. But no specialized function can offer a complete and vital education to a people.

Consider: When the tiny little kingdoms of Israel and Judah were in flower, with every function of life represented in its proper proportions, husbandry, handicrafts, trade, medicine, law, religion, a book by many authors was pieced together which, translated into any language in the world, is the best book in that language. The Book; the Bible.

In the Diaspora, down to the very recent period of the Enlightenment, Jews have been limited to a narrow range of functions. They have nevertheless done great writing. Maimonides, Spinoza, Ricardo, Marx. But is there one of these who conveys the full sense of life of Moses—or the corporation of writers known as Moses—or of the romancers of Judges, the biographer of Samuel, Solomon, the Prophets, Jesus? A nation's sound intellect and true literature come out of its political, social, occupational integrity. This integrity is by way of being established in the State of Israel.

And that is a chief reason why I, not a nationalist, not a Zionist, am wholly for the Republic of Israel. Its population can live only by developing every occupation known to man. And living life to the full, within its narrow boundaries, it can stand up among the creative small nations to whom the next phase of the world's intellectual life belongs.

ALVIN JOHNSON

The New School
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . I think that the reasoning of Lerner as to the economic function performed by middlemen is irrefutable. It seems to me, however, that he attempts to prove more than he has to. He could safely admit that some people may still dislike certain characteristics of the middleman as social species while acknowledging the fallacy of the "economic parasitism" argument. It is possible—to take a rather extreme case—to consider a speculator who benefits from need and disruption not the most attractive fellowman while admitting that people would be economically worse off if such kind of activity had not taken place—as long as nothing else is (or can be) undertaken in order to eliminate the basic disturbance (this qualification is made very clear by Lerner's own example of leaking

pipes). Under such circumstances people still might—theoretically speaking—choose between more equity by fighting speculation and better supply with goods by tolerating it. But also if they were practical enough to choose the last, the moral indignation against "profiteering" would still be useful as an additional stimulus to find the pipes which do not leak. . . .

With these reservations, the critique of the attitude of some Zionist groups to the problem is in my opinion fully justified: I would merely add that according to their spokesmen not only is the middleman inferior in economic usefulness to the worker or farmer, but so is the tailor with regard to a miner—an approach which reflects their general negation of Diaspora Jewry rather than a specific prejudice against the middleman as such.

I think, however, that Lerner's attack on Marxism is much too violent. The Marxian notion of "productiveness" (in the sense of being a source of "exchange value") is not equivalent to usefulness. As Lerner himself points out, Marxists, while denying that capital and land create value, consider them indispensable for production. This holds—*mutatis mutandis*—also for their attitude toward trade: no attempt is made to deny that the function of connecting producers with consumers is important. The Marxian position does not imply any particularly belligerent attitude toward middlemen—no more, at any rate, than toward private property in general, which is quite a different matter: and also here distinction is made between large-scale establishments which are "ripe" for socialization and the small scale which cannot be taken over without injury to the useful function they perform. . . .

Whatever my reservations to particular parts of Lerner's argument may be, his debunking of the superstitious idea of the economic parasitism of the middleman is the most brilliant and definitive I know of. I enjoyed his article immensely just as I enjoy everything he writes—also when I do not happen to agree with him on all counts.

ALEXANDER ERLICH

Cambridge, Mass.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I read Abba P. Lerner's article with great interest, but I am a little astonished that a man of Professor Lerner's ability should have made such a poor case for the functions of the middleman. . . .

The distributor does much more than move goods from one place to another. That is almost his smallest function. Professor Lerner seems to me to fall into the same trap with so many of our inexperienced economists, and that is, he

fails to observe that, by and large, consumer goods are not bought, they are sold. From his article I would assume that he thinks that all you have to do to sell goods is to have them available and on display at a point where there are consumers who want to buy these goods. This is the philosophy of the Socialists, the Communists, and the socialistic planners. But it does not work that way.

The distributor not only has the goods available in stock, for which he performs the necessary and useful function of providing capital, store rent, delivery service, and the financing of the purchase of the goods, but none of these services would have any important function in the economy if the distributor was unable to sell his goods. It is his efforts in personal salesmanship and advertising that move the goods, and this provides the manufacturer with a steady market so that the manufacturer can organize his business to produce goods in volume and in a steady flow, thus greatly reducing the price to the ultimate consumer.

The best argument for all of the people who do not work in actual production of goods is the plain fact that the country with the highest standard of living, that is, the United States, employs more people in non-manufacturing enterprise, percentagewise, than any other country in the world . . . while those countries with the fewest number of people engaged in non-manufacturing enterprise have the lowest standard of living. This is true in China and India, and is probably true in Russia today.

So the best argument for the middleman is the fact that where they are most numerous, most aggressive, the standard of living is higher than anywhere else. The reasons why this should be so are not very complicated, but it does not seem to me that Professor Lerner has touched on the most important aspects of this situation.

JOSEPH E. RIDDER

The Journal of Commerce
New York City

Hebrew A Barrier?

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I have read with great interest Ralph Weiman's admirable article "The Re-Creation of Hebrew" in the June COMMENTARY and fully agree with his main thesis that the restoration and adaptation of an ancient language in the short time in which it has been accomplished in Palestine is a remarkable achievement. I am wondering, however, why the author has failed to discuss some of the unfavorable politi-

cal and cultural consequences involved in the linguistic policy of the new state . . . the possibility that the use of Hebrew will serve as a barrier to the recognition by the outside world of the literary and scientific contributions of Israel.

If the new state is to make its mark in the world, it is most likely to be through the intellectual and artistic qualities which even their enemies have always conceded to the Jews, rather than on the basis of its scanty material resources or political influence. We cannot, of course, be certain that the attainment of political independence will be followed by a flowering of culture in Israel, but the outside world will be very much disappointed if the unprecedented concentration of talent brought about by the flight of European Jews to Palestine should fail to yield an outstanding contribution to Western civilization and gain prestige for the new state. . . . [Yet] the value of its contribution will not be fully appreciated on account of the language difficulty.

There is also a more practical consideration. It is generally recognized that a very close economic relationship with the outside world is essential to the new state if it is to provide a decent standard of living for its population. Businessmen in foreign countries will need a reliable and convenient source of information about economic and political developments in Israel to guide them in their plans and decisions, but it is unlikely that many of them will take the trouble to learn Hebrew in order to make use of the official publications of the new state. The use of a supplementary language, as is done in countries like Japan, Iran, and Turkey, is not a dignified solution and may be irritating to the newborn nationalism. . . . [And] when conditions become more stabilized there will be fewer press and radio representatives from outside. . . .

There will be, of course, many Israelis qualified by language and intellectual training to interpret Israel to the outside world, and not a few of them will serve as representatives of foreign newspapers and radio chains. But this may not last. With the growth of nationalism, the country will undoubtedly lose a good share of its cosmopolitanism. . . .

Considering the potentialities of Israel as an influence towards raising the world prestige of the Jewish race, it will, I hope, readily be admitted that the adoption of re-created Hebrew as the national language of the new state has more than linguistic implications.

LOUIS DOMERATZKY

McLean, Virginia.

BOOKS IN REVIEW

Thirty-five Years from Now

NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR. By GEORGE ORWELL. Harcourt, Brace. 314 pp. \$3.00.

Reviewed by MARTIN GREENBERG

"Do you begin to see, then, what kind of world we are creating?" his inquisitor asks Winston Smith, the hero of this novel and a citizen of Oceania, one of the three totalitarian super-states into which the world has been divided, whose political system is called Ingsoc (English Socialism). "It is the exact opposite of the stupid hedonistic Utopias that the old reformers imagined." Such in fact is *Nineteen Eighty-Four*: More's *Utopia* stood on its head. The 16th-century Englishman's ideal commonwealth of Nowhere has become the 20th-century Englishman's totalitarian hell of Everywhere.

More's work, however, like so much of the Utopian literature, is cast in the form of a traveler's report; by this device the author lends a certain measure of reality and plausibility to what would otherwise be an abstract discourse on political philosophy. But there is no plot, no drama; it makes no aesthetic pretensions and raises no aesthetic problems. We judge it for the quality of its political vision, and for that alone. Whereas *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a novel, in fact as well as in name. Its vision of totalitarian society is ultimately inseparable from the story it tells—the story is the vision.

BUT the story is the least interesting thing in the novel, although the form the author has chosen for his anatomization of totalitarianism obliges him to give over most of the work to it. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is quite simply a thriller, with some of the adornments of scientific fiction. Its hero, a member of the Outer party, in a revulsion against the inhuman seediness and lack of personal life under Ingsoc, begins to note down his "thoughtcrimes" in a diary (the mere keeping of which is a counter-revolutionary act), and then conspires against

the regime by carrying on a love affair (all love is illicit in Oceania—"We shall abolish the orgasm," Smith is told by O'Brien, his inquisitor). But the love affair is a quite perfunctory thing that, as a story, would merely seem to illustrate the difficulties of arranging amatory rendezvous in a world that does not love a lover. The meaning of the love affair has to be stated abstractly, for the story alone doesn't make us *feel* the meaning—"Their embrace had been a battle, the climax a victory. It was a blow struck against the Party. It was a political act."

Much the same criticism can be made of the highly praised last section in which Smith is arrested by the Thought Police and tortured in the chambers of the "Ministry of Love." The object of the torture is total conversion, total surrender of the soul to the party: the victim in the end is made to love Big Brother, dictator of Oceania, and to believe, really to believe, when the party asks it of him, that two and two make five, or three, or nothing.

All this we are told, but there is very little of it that we can see. What we see are the bare white cells of the Ministry of Love, vague torture machines with needles spinning on their dial faces, and the melodramatically dreadful "Room 101," at the same time that there is a good deal of rather abstract talk going on. I thought Koestler did the matter much more imaginatively in *Darkness at Noon*.

IN THE end the story proves inadequate for saying everything that Mr. Orwell wants to say, and he is obliged to supplement it, rather clumsily, with a lengthy and repetitious quotation from "The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism" by Emmanuel Goldstein, arch-heretic of Ingsoc and the Trotsky to Big Brother's Stalin.

Nineteen Eighty-Four is more remarkable for its ingenuity, I think, than for its political imagination. The incidental insights into "oligarchical collectivism" are often very sharp, but what is put forth as the ultimate insight—"The

Party seeks power entirely for its own sake. We are not interested in the good of others; we are interested solely in power. Not wealth or luxury or long life or happiness; only power, pure power. [And pure] power is in inflicting pain and humiliation"—falls dreadfully flat, as do the scenes in the Ministry of Love meant to give flesh to the bare bones of this thesis; as a political statement, indeed, it is meaningless. Moreover, coming from an important functionary of that party whose three slogans are "War Is Peace," "Freedom Is Slavery," "Ignorance Is Strength," its forthrightness is entirely inconsistent. Here, surely, what was called for was the exercising of that technique of Bolshevik hypocrisy which Mr. Orwell, in the official language of Oceania, Newspeak, wittily calls "doublethink"—"the power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously, and accepting both of them. . . . *Doublethink* lies at the very heart of Ingsoc, since the essential act of the Party is to use conscious deception while retaining the firmness of purpose that goes with complete honesty." The logic of the work itself, as well as psychological truth, forbids the author's putting such a final explanation of Ingsoc into the mouth of one of its representatives.

Newspeak, of which the above is an illustration, is easily the best thing in the novel, developing in terms of Mr. Orwell's story the hint of a Utopian language given at the end of Sir Thomas More's book. It is a bureaucratic "rationalization" and reduction of language to the point where it is incapable of expressing unorthodox ideas, or of even calling up forbidden associations. By means of it Mr. Orwell makes his most penetrating observations on totalitarian socialism. For instance, of the telescoping of words and phrases as in *Nazi*, *Gestapo*, *Comintern*, *Inprecorr*, and *Agitprop*, it is said: "In the beginning the practice had been adopted as it were instinctively, but in Newspeak it was used with a conscious purpose. It was perceived that in thus abbreviating a name one narrowed and subtly altered its meaning, by cutting out most of the associations that would otherwise cling to it. The words *Communist International*, for instance, call up a composite picture of universal human brotherhood, red flags, barricades, Karl Marx, and the Paris Commune. The word *Comintern*, on the other hand, suggests merely a tightly knit organization and a well-defined body of doctrine. It refers to something almost as easily recog-

nized, and as limited in purpose, as a chair or a table."

IN ALL Utopian literature, even in so noble a conception as More's, one can detect a certain impatience with the human condition. If men would only heed the light of reason burning inside them, these books say, how simple a thing the earthly paradise would be. As Oceania is a negative Utopia, so in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* one can detect a certain negative impatience, a disillusionment verging upon despair. Though the book is aimed at the fanaticism of the world-improvers, something of that same fanaticism lies behind its disillusion. The chagrin expressed in these pages is too extreme, too violent, for all the evenness of Mr. Orwell's splendid prose. Because the Russian reality is a grotesque inversion of the socialist dream, he is ready to condemn the whole world to totalitarian perdition. The comfortlessness and seediness of life under Ingsoc, with its obvious and, politically speaking, gratuitous reference to contemporary British socialism (though here the novel loses is schematic abstractness and comes vividly alive), the very word Ingsoc, carry the implication that England today is on the way to totalitarianism. Mr. Orwell has his Goldstein write that "by the fourth decade of the twentieth century all the main currents of political thought were authoritarian"—surely an extreme and desperate view. Two of Kafka's aphorisms are appropriate here: "There are two cardinal sins from which all the others spring: impatience and laziness. Because of impatience we were driven out of Paradise, because of laziness we cannot return. Perhaps, however, there is only one cardinal sin: impatience. Because of impatience we were driven out, because of impatience we cannot return." And the second: "All human error is impatience, a premature renunciation of method, a delusive pinning down of a delusion." *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is to a large extent a delusive pinning down of the Utopian delusion.

The Missing American Self

THIS WAS AMERICA. Edited by OSCAR HANDLIN. 602 pp. Cambridge, Harvard University Press. \$6.00.

Reviewed by ROBERT GORHAM DAVIS

BECAUSE of their broad similarity, it is easiest to suggest the particular emphasis of *This Was*

America by contrasting it with Henry Steele Commager's *America in Perspective*, published in 1947. The two anthologies show themselves quite distinct in character, though both are compilations of European travelers' reports of America from the late 18th to the middle 20th century. Handlin, whose volume is the larger, makes use of only six of the thirty-five travelers quoted in *America in Perspective*, and prints none of the same passages. Commager prefers abstract interpretation, the characteristically annoying or amusing dicta of well-known literary people and theorists like Harriet Martineau, Marryat, Dickens, Macaulay, Hugo Munsterberg, Matthew Arnold, G. K. Chesterton, W. L. George, Madariaga, and John Buchan. Though Handlin quotes from Frederica Bremer, Paul Bourget, Ernst Toller, E. E. Kisch, and André Maurois, most of his forty visitors are obscure figures, many of them previously untranslated. Their writing is more descriptive, documentary, materialistic, and workaday, largely devoid of qualities of sensibility or style that would make it interesting for its own sake.

As a matter of fact, if comparisons are to be made, much can still be said for Allan Nevins' *American Social History as Recorded by British Travellers*, published back in 1923. Though Nevins excludes continental reports, he prints the kind of external description by good writers which Commager omits. And in his long editorial introductions to the different sections, Nevins quotes from and summarizes the impressions of a wide range of visitors who are significant and representative, but not worth reprinting at any length. In this way he gives a coherent sense of what America meant to Englishmen, and yet avoids the redundancies, inconsequentialities, and commonplaces which distress the lay reader of Handlin's *This Was America* and which sometimes make him wonder just what new or deeper sense of his country he is expected to acquire from these rather banal and humorless Poles, Norwegians, and Italians of fifty or a hundred years ago.

"Commerce occupies all their ideas, turns all their heads and absorbs all their speculations. Thus you come across few worth-while works, and few authors." "A feverish activity seems to obsess these inhabitants of North America." "America worships two idols. First that deaf, dumb, blind Mammon before whom the masses humbly bow in this land. They kneel before him, setting their honor aside, day and night thinking only of amassing wealth, of building

palaces. The second idol, on the contrary, sees, hears, walks and talks, and is above all full of life; it is the female sex." "In the salon the American male is a fish out of water; not one of them will deny that his true place is the office, the countinghouse, or the political meeting." "A Frenchman may be defined as a man who is very much decorated and who eats a great deal of bread. The American, for his part, may be defined as a man without much decoration who chews a great deal of gum."

So in the 18th and 19th centuries, so when artists of great wit and originality, like Evelyn Waugh and Jean Cocteau, return from their American travels today. The overheated rooms, the independence of children, the tobacco spitting, the hasty, silent meals, the absence of beggars. The iteration is important because it establishes the stereotype, and if the iteration is boring, it is partly because the American qualities that most impress Europeans remain remarkably fixed through wars, industrialization, and the inpouring of immigrants. Everyone notices the eagerness for wealth, the diffusion and dilution of knowledge, the diversity of religious sects, the tyranny of public opinion, the democratic manners and judgment of men as individuals and yet the realities of class distinction, the rowdiness and violence, not only in the West and South but in the great Eastern cities, and finally, most considerable of all, the conflict between egalitarian pretensions and the actual treatment of the nation's ethnic and racial minorities.

Few of the reports surprise us, perhaps because few of the Europeans themselves are surprised, or find what they did not expect to find. They expatiate according to their Jacobin or Tory prejudices, their scientific or aesthetic training, but what they notice in common defines a European cultural unity more clearly than an American one. The details Mr. Handlin's Europeans record which would seem most bizarre and informative to their readers at home are likely to be least instructive to Americans: the details of beano games, big-league baseball, radio commercials, and the New York subway. The chief charm of such descriptions is the quaintness a rather literal translation into English gives them.

Visitors' impressionistic reports are likely to seem thin and out of focus because we compare them with native descriptions of the same sort.

The geographical and cultural diversity of the United States, and the mobility, curiosity, and adventurousness of its inhabitants, have resulted from earliest colonial times in an extremely rich native travel literature. Most of our major writers from Irving to Dreiser and Dos Passos have written such accounts of their country, critical, realistic, self-revelatory. A New England Unitarian at a Southern camp meeting or slave auction is struck by the same external details as a European, but responds more deeply because as an American he is more concerned. Most of the Europeans in *This Was America* report observations rather than experiences. Though some stayed and worked here for long periods, they did not participate responsibly in American events, they did not know intimately American men of stature. They do not even describe love affairs with American women. The detachment is complete, and so we must compare the value of this kind of detachment or perspective with the detachment or perspective a native writer can achieve through literary technique or as a result of conflict or alienation. We can compare it with the perspective of the imaginary Persian or Chinese visitors to Europe in the 18th century, of Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, Heine's *Deutschland*, or James's *The American Scene*.

It is proper to raise this question, even though Handlin's purpose is frankly external and descriptive. We don't have to go to Europeans for purely physical description of Monticello or the steel mills of Pittsburgh or Aimee Semple McPherson. What they can give us of value is the increased self-knowledge that comes from seeing oneself through other eyes. And despite the claim of the title, that *This Was America*, it is just the sense of the self as American that is missing here, as it is in so many scientific and well-documented American studies. There is no real concern with what it feels like to be an American as compared with what it looks like, no real concern with the symbols, the typical or archetypal scenes, characters, and events that can express in a unique way the inner continuity of American experience. In a society of wooden buildings and rude manners, with so little manifest tradition or ritual, this is exactly what Europeans could not observe "in the light, fresh American air," as James says, "un-thickened and undarkened by customs and institutions." Nor could they, except through literature, know directly a "society where introspection, thanks to the want of other entertain-

ment, played almost the part of a social resource."

For all its metaphysics of blood polarity and the white psyche, D. H. Lawrence's *Studies in Classic American Literature* gives a better sense of the distinct American experience than the reports of the unimaginative, though they faithfully jot down what they see. Strange as Lawrence makes some of the characters in American literature seem, they do not seem as remote or apart from us now as some of the Georgia planters or Philadelphia merchants whom these visitors minutely describe. Something of the same sort happened in the naturalist novel of social protest in America, which so delighted Europeans in recent decades by confirming their sense of us. Here, too, the descriptive scientific method is insufficient to express the inner character of a people who, at their best, are so very different from what they commonly seem. This character is realized in thoroughly American writers like Hawthorne, Melville, or James, but such character and such writing are quite inconceivable from the evidence *This Was America* offers us.

On Musical Jewishness

THE MUSIC OF ISRAEL. By PETER GRADENWITZ. W. W. Norton. 334 pp. \$5.00.

Reviewed by KURT LIST

FOR a number of years the Jewish musical scene has been vexed by an unhappy tendency to confuse Jewish music with music composed by Jews. The difference between, say, A. W. Binder's *Amos on Times Square* and Mendelssohn's *Italian Symphony* has been so obscured that there is genuine need for a book to insist on it and, moreover, to define in historical perspective just what the nature of "musical Jewishness" is. Peter Gradenwitz set out to write this book with, seemingly, all the necessary qualifications; he is a practiced critic and composer who got his experience in pre-Hitlerian Germany, and has now lived in Palestine for more than ten years.

But his book is disappointing. Dr. Gradenwitz says nothing to embarrass the inferior composers, anaesthetic musicologists, and hysterical nationalists who have collaborated in the game of identifying Jewish artists with Jewish art. Although *The Music of Israel* incorporates find-

Just published.

Punishment without Crime

**WHAT YOU CAN DO
ABOUT PREJUDICE**

by S. Andhil Fineberg

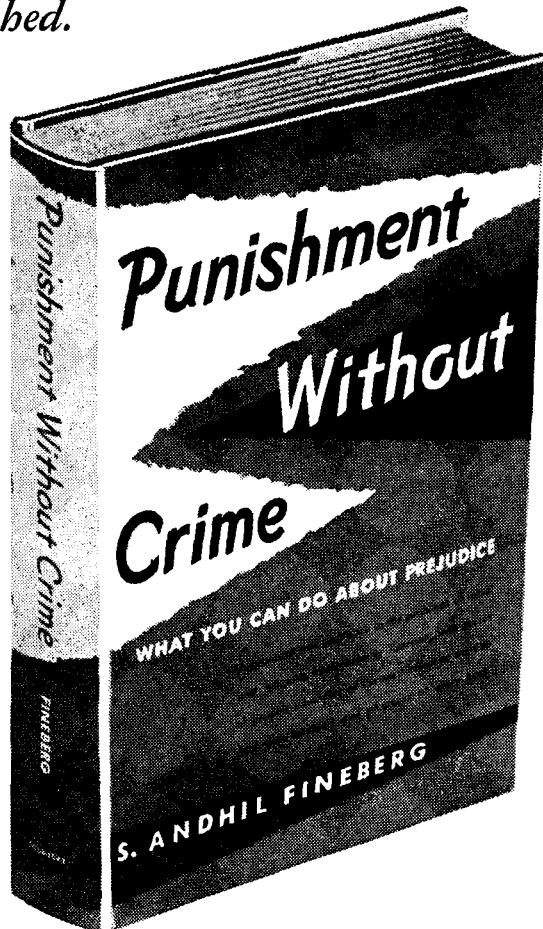
THE galleys of this book were read by a number of distinguished persons. Here are some of the comments that have been received:

► **JACOB BLAUSTEIN**, *President of the American Jewish Committee*: "Dr. Fineberg has incorporated in his book the rich and varied experience he has gathered as a spiritual leader and a community relations specialist in dealing with a subject of vital importance to our society and to our democracy. By revealing the nature of religious and racial prejudice, explaining its component parts, its effect upon the mental health of man, and how—by the precept and example—you and I should deal with situations created by that dangerous tension, he has made an outstanding contribution to the preservation and strengthening of our democratic way of life."

► **BENJAMIN FINE**, *Education Editor, N. Y. TIMES*: "PUNISHMENT WITHOUT CRIME can be read with value by educators and laymen alike. This book, I am certain, will make a definite contribution to the field of human relations."

► **WALTER W. WHITE**, *Secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People*: "This book answers many of the questions of all who accept responsibility for bettering race relations. I hope PUNISHMENT WITHOUT CRIME will be warmly received and widely read."

► **WILLIAM HEARD KILPATRICK**, *Chairman, Bureau of Intercultural Education and President of Urban League of Greater New York*: "PUNISHMENT WITHOUT CRIME is clearly and attractively written, easy to read, thoroughly sincere but without



any extreme emotionalism. It is an unusually practical book in an area greatly demanding our serious attention."

► **HARLEY M. KILGORE**, *United States Senator*: "Dr. Fineberg cites a wealth of material to show what each community can do to eliminate the mental swamps that mar our basically democratic society. I hope that every American will read this book."

► **REV. DR. HENRY SMITH LEIPER**, *Associate General Secretary, World Council of Churches*: "I have never found a more helpful book or a more practical one than this. It is healthy, sober, restrained, full of common sense always marked by realism and discernment and based, obviously, on experience formed by comprehension and good will."

► **REV. DR. JOHN L. FARGE, S. J.**, *Associate Editor of AMERICA*: "I shall certainly recommend this indispensable work to all, or every faith, who are striving for a united and genuinely democratic America."

*At all
book-
sellers*

PRICE, \$3.50

Additional comments appear on the jacket of the book.

DOUBLEDAY

ings of recent musical research and is therefore more up to date than Idelsohn's famous survey, *Jewish Music* (a somewhat limited, largely technical, but otherwise superb book that appeared in 1929), it is not nearly so clear or intelligent. And in addition, Dr. Gradenwitz cannot resist the clichés of the Biedermeier tourist; his first sentence reads: "Under a solitary palm tree on the edge of the wide desert of the Southland a shepherd boy dreamily plays his pipe."

THE early chapters, devoted to ancient and medieval Jewish music, are probably the best. Here Dr. Gradenwitz has effected a plausible compromise between scholarly musicological investigation, with its usual fussy speculations on the origins of musical instruments, and a concise report on musical events obviously designed for the layman. But even here one has reservations. Dr. Gradenwitz's method of reporting is one-sided; he dwells more on the mechanics of instruments than on the aesthetics of music, yet at the same time fails to point out the mutual influences, on the one hand, of technological advances that tended to determine specific scales, and on the other hand, of the importance of the voice, which would force technical inventions in certain directions. Furthermore, his discussions of the social backgrounds involved are highly superficial, being restricted to dates and rudimentary textbook observations.

The latter part of the book abandons the method of the historical survey for the tedious enumeration of composers, whose lives are sketched in the manner of *Everyman's Dictionary of Music*, with their merits or demerits not even being touched upon. Then there is a chapter, "The Bible in Music" in which the author simply enumerates all the Biblical subjects he can think of that were ever set to music, no matter by whom.

The closing section is devoted to modern liturgical music, the European East, modern Hebrew music, and the music of Palestine. In the first chapter of this portion of his book Dr. Gradenwitz is completely uncritical, and his conclusions culminate in the observation that "Jewish and non-Jewish composers like Roy Harris, Bernard Rogers, Darius Milhaud, Arnold Schoenberg, and in Israel Mordecai Starominsky have enriched liturgical music by original works in which the ancient spirit is expressed in modern terms."

The final chapters revert again to the dictionary method. In "Hebrew Music of Our Time"

the author introduces a new concept of "purely emotional music," which he elaborates by praising mainly Ernest Bloch and Leonard Bernstein. In the chapter on current Palestinian developments Dr. Gradenwitz gives an unwittingly but perhaps justifiably drab picture of a musical Israel that seems to waver between unhealthy folksiness and artificial Orientalism—trends with which he seems unaccountably to sympathize.

How does it happen that so learned a critic as Dr. Gradenwitz lets himself write such a book? I think the answer is the current vogue for "scientific" method, aiming at a nondescript and irrelevant objectivity that permits no central viewpoint. Music is not examined for what it is but for the way in which it can be *used*. The result, however, is not scientific but publicistic; compositions are discussed from the standpoint of quantity and national achievement, never from that of quality, consequence, or absolute values. Nor does the artificial bracketing of composers and works of widely differing values—e.g., "the three great figures in nineteenth-century musical history," Mendelssohn, Meyerbeer, and Mahler—make for objectivity. On the contrary, it vitiates any effort to see history in its tendentious, i.e., true and objective aspects, and in avoiding "mistakes" in judgments it also avoids the realities of art.

But it is when Dr. Gradenwitz attacks deeper problems that one is most exasperated. In speaking initially of the Jews of antiquity as the cultural link between the Sumerian and Egyptian civilizations and in defining the historical Jewish mission as that of cultural catalysis, he gives one a glimpse of what a history of Jewish music should be. But he will not pursue a theme. Thus when he reports on the 13th-century Jewish minnesinger, Suesskind, the Jew of Trimberg, or on Woelflin von Lochheim, the Jewish scribe of the *Lochheim Song Book*, one of the most important manuscripts of medieval music, or on Salomone Rossi il Ebreo, the famous 17th-century composer, or even on Mendelssohn, he fails, in taking note of their existence, to explain how they were possible in a hermetically sealed Gentile world, and what their work actually meant in Western terms. And when he comes to those Jews who have created virtually the entire aspect of popular music in our century, he has equally little to say. George Gershwin receives five lines, Jerome Kern and Richard Rodgers are not even mentioned.

Harper & Brothers
announce the forthcoming publication of

THE JEWS

Their History, Culture and Religion

*In Two Volumes
with illustrations and maps*

EDITED BY LOUIS FINKELSTEIN

*President of The Jewish Theological Seminary of America
in cooperation with distinguished Jewish and Christian
scholars of America and other lands.*



*This will be the first comprehensive work dealing with
all aspects of the heritage and achievements of Judaism
and the Jews—prepared by specialists in the various fields.*

- Part I. The History of Judaism and the Jews
- Part II. The Role of Judaism in Civilization
- Part III. The Sociology and Demography of the Jews
- Part IV. The Jewish Religion

Every Jew who desires to be informed about himself and the tradition and contributions of his people will want this revealing work. Every American who wishes to appreciate the fascinating history of Judaism as a tradition, culture and faith will eagerly read it.

TWO VOLUMES BOXED \$12.00
(COMING IN NOVEMBER)

HARPER & BROTHERS

49 EAST 33RD STREET

NEW YORK 16, N. Y.

DR. GRADENWITZ'S refusal to evaluate music in terms of level and result is not solely due to his pursuit of antiseptic objectivity. In part it also stems from his national bias, which is at pains to keep the Jewish and Gentile worlds separated. Though this bias is neither hysterical nor obtrusive, it exists unmistakably, and makes itself most noticeable in his discussion of Schoenberg, where he insists that the Oriental scale technique is "fundamentally the same as the modern twelve-tone technique."

Dr. Gradenwitz's separatist concept prevents him from seeing the modern Jewish artist as what he essentially is: an "intruder" in modern culture who, because he is bound to tradition without being enslaved by it, is capable of infusing Western art with new creative vitality. On the other hand, the author's national bias prompts him to make Jewish music appear as a superior source from which the Western world has drawn vigorous inspiration. To solve this contradiction Dr. Gradenwitz pronounces Jewish music a separate entity in the polemical present (when its influence is actually enormous), but notices its influences on the West in the distant, more tolerant past when that influence was limited. Unable to disengage social anti-Semitism from the Western absorption of Jewish culture, Dr. Gradenwitz offers a grotesquely distorted picture of the meaning, importance, and ascendancy of Jewish music in its historical course. The effort to support his theory leads him into historical inaccuracies. Thus he attributes to early incantational Jewish music a decisive influence on the Christian chant, whereas the truth is that the latter, though it accepted some Jewish melodic aspects, actually followed the aesthetic concepts of the Greeks and, renouncing the magical intent of the Oriental Jewish music, fully enunciated the pleasure principle characteristic of Western art; by transforming the listener's response from the Oriental narcotic submission to an active aesthetic response, Christian chant really rejected the influence of the Jewish liturgical practice.

The Music of Israel proves once more that a historical survey of any branch of Jewish culture requires more than factual knowledge; it also requires a grasp of the essential values of culture and, beyond that, a mind forgiving and disinterested enough to soar above the nightmare of Buchenwald. Only such a mind can validly synthesize a world in which those who praise the *St. Matthew Passion* defile its rediscoverer.

Evasion Through Metaphor

JUDAISM: A WAY OF LIFE. By Samuel S. Cohon. Cincinnati, Union of American Hebrew Congregations. 448 pp. \$2.75.

Reviewed by EMIL L. FACKENHEIM

THAT the scarcity and meagerness of Jewish theological thinking is a disgrace to American Judaism is a point which need not be argued. But it is important to understand the inner reasons for this situation. A reading of Professor Cohon's latest book is an excellent means to this end; for on the one hand, it excels the run-of-the-mill rabbinical books sufficiently in degree to show up their barrenness, yet on the other hand it shares their fundamental shortcomings sufficiently in kind to reveal the roots of that barrenness.

Most current volumes of Jewish thinking are concerned with synthesizing, in the most convenient manner, the Judaism of the modern American Jew with his general outlook as 20th century American. In the process there is sacrificed most of Judaism, as well as what is really intrinsic to the modern intellectual outlook. What is uncomfortable in classical Judaism is abandoned as "unessential" or "superseded by the evolution of thought"—and presumably it is reason or science which provides the criteria; yet whenever reason and science seem to lead to conclusions which threaten peace of mind—such as agnosticism regarding the meaning of life or the purpose of the universe—we are referred back to the "essence" of Judaism for the assurance of meaning and purpose. In other words, most of these works draw their justification neither from reason nor revelation; they merely make the already complacent still more complacent, and provide no guidance for the genuine seeker after God and Jewish religious existence.

Professor Cohon's book is superior to the ordinary book of this sort in that it is the product of sincere search, a willingness to face what is difficult and uncomfortable, and in that it bears traces of considerable scholarship in both classical Judaism and modern thought. (Since the emphasis of the book is on the religious life, he relies particularly heavily on the psychology of religion, and here his views are often instructive.) Consequently, this book is not merely a statement of the views to be expected from a

professor of Reform Jewish theology; its author was willing to grapple with his subject and to learn from it. A Reform Jew, he nevertheless argues forcefully for the significance of form and ceremonial law in the religious life, with a fine understanding for concrete reality. Further, he overcomes the temptation, all-too-present to the Reform Jew, of dissolving the religious into the ethical element. And occasionally he penetrates to insights into the nature of classical Judaism which border on the profound. Everywhere we see signs of genuine inquiry.

With all these virtues, however, this book shares the basic defects of American Jewish theological writing; indeed, the virtues make the defects all the more obvious and saddening.

INTENSE and even devoted learning in detail, we can see from this book, is no substitute for clarity in basic philosophical and theological categories. Professor Cohon speaks sometimes of God as if He were a mere ideal to which man must aspire; at other times He seems to be a sort of idealistic world-spirit; and again the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who confronts man in existential encounter. But if the first is

the true view, this should basically affect the doctrine of prayer (for no one can pray to a mere ideal); and if the last doctrine is the true one we require a theological justification of such a God (Professor Cohon evades this in metaphorical language of which we shall speak later); and if the second view be true, we should require a defence of idealistic philosophy.

To the classical Jew, Judaism was a body of revealed law plus the encounter between God and Israel. Cohon, with all of liberalism, substitutes for this the "essence"-approach—in itself highly dubious and requiring fundamental analysis. But Cohon's use of this category has particular ambiguities of its own. He knows, of course, that the "essence" of Judaism is not simply what has survived, and that personal "religious experience" is not as such authoritative. What then are the criteria of norm and value? At times spiritual insights are exalted as against mere positive fact; yet on the other hand, judgments of value are said to be relative to time and circumstance; and then what is valuable and binding in Judaism is seen by the pragmatic test: "Reform can only recom-

**The screen's first
romantic adventure
based on the
flaming days that
made Palestine the
powder-keg of the
Near East!**



**WORLD PREMIERE
ENGAGEMENT
NOW**

CRITERION

B'way & 45th St.—Continuous Performances

mend values, standards and institutions on the ground that they have proved themselves spiritually efficacious in the life of the Jewish people."

Thus potential insights into detail are annulled by confusion in basic philosophical and theological categories, and, one suspects, even failure to take the latter seriously; psychological concepts appear where theological ones ought to, and what was originally a genuine perception dissolves into empty metaphor.

Metaphorical language has its legitimate use in religious writing when its role is precisely defined as indirect speech in a realm where direct speech is impossible. But Cohon shares the common vice of modern Jewish theological writing in using metaphor homiletically, as a substitute for precise thought where such thought is imperative. What precisely are we to understand by sentences such as: "To be creative, tradition must not serve as an embalming fluid for the preservation of dead remains. It must rather be a living stream that makes glad the city of God. In touch with the life springs, it must help man to greater freedom and growth"? Characteristically, it is the basic terms and doctrines that are lost in a haze of language. But while intellectually confused and even meaningless, these metaphors have a certain emotive meaning. Theological doctrines, the implication is, are neither true nor false, or their truth consists in their efficacy—the "enrichment" of life they provide.

THIS brings us to the most serious shortcoming of Cohon's book, which is again only symptomatic of the state of American Jewish theology: its pragmatism. We witness today a general tendency to defend Judaism on the grounds of its social and psychological usefulness, and simultaneously rabbis foresake their proper business, theology, to meddle with psychiatry. But Judaism cannot be understood in pragmatic categories. Cohon attributes to religious leaders the ultimate aim to achieve the personally and socially useful. Is this not a gross distortion of the truth? Is not the true ultimate aim of the religious leader to preach that which is good in itself, as a duty to be performed for the sake of God? The pragmatic interpretation of religion is as distorted as the Marxist position whose inversion it is. For religion has now become a wholesome pill rather than the opiate of the people.

The pragmatic interpretation transforms re-

ligion, which Cohon himself says must be "heroic," into a comfortable practice of mediocrity. It can hardly be said without insult to the martyrs and prophets that "religion . . . connects man with the tendency in things toward normalcy." And while Cohon properly observes that the fear of God drives out all other fears, he is anxious to minimize the fact that it is often infinitely more terrible for the believer to be confronted with the living God.

It may be objected to the foregoing criticism that Professor Cohon's book is meant for the layman who is unwilling or unable to delve into profound theological discussion. To an extent this is true, and certainly the general reader will benefit from this book in many details. But in a profounder sense the point is not valid. For in religion we must first ask what we can truly believe; only then can we preach it in popular language. The opposite procedure—to worry about techniques of "putting it across" before worrying about the truth of what one wants to put across—is self-defeating. It would be very desirable if Cohon forgot for a while all about the useful, the practical, and the popular and used his great learning to work out a clear, coherent, and true theology for modern Judaism—and if he left it to lesser men afterwards to popularize his results.

The Shock of Non-Recognition

A TREASURY OF BROOKLYN. Edited by Mary Ellen and Mark Murphy and Ralph Foster Weld. William Sloane Associates. 435 pp. \$5.00.

Reviewed by WILLIAM POSTER

THE chief effect upon me of reading the material in this book—all of it about a place where I lived for more than twenty years—was a moderate shock of non-recognition and a rather awe-inspiring awareness of the distance from reality to which some authors will be lured by a pretty metaphor or a trick ending. Brooklyn may well be, as the editors aptly remark, a legend without a text, but, with quite a wealth of material on hand, they have done little to remedy the deficiency.

The introduction to this labor of love begins reasonably enough, as if it were going to get somewhere, and stops, after two pages, as abruptly as if it ran into a stone wall. It catapults the reader into a chaos of large and small

fragments of writing culled from old documents, newspapers, magazines, novels, and biographies, and included on the basis of any conceivable relation to Brooklyn rather than to fulfill some definite purpose. It is a delightfully unpredictable volume, full of strange adventures in judgment and taste. The omission, to take only a single case, of the poetry of Hart Crane while publishing that of Nathalia Crane, is an example of the rather bewildering editing.

"In assembling this book," the editors inform you at one climactic point, "we thought of scattering Whitman through it like chartreuse in a pousse café or perhaps the simile might be better if we said in a series of pousse cafés." After which tormented flight of epicurean poetry, they limit the selection from Whitman to one mediocre, twelve-line obituary he wrote for a Brooklyn newspaper!

Withal, something of the Brooklyn fever and flavor gets into the book and it does contain some extraordinary material if very little extraordinary writing—most of it from accounts of Brooklyn politicians, gangsters, and such notable figures as Henry Ward Beecher, Dundy and Thomas, the skirt-chasing, gambling, dipsomaniac duo who built Luna Park, and, of course, the Durocher-MacPhail combine. The historical documents (letters, journals kept by early travelers, etc.) are interesting *per se* but are not arranged or selected in such a way as to give one a perspective on contemporary Brooklyn, a sense of its relation to the past. Likewise most of the writers who try to treat Brooklyn as a historical entity, fall under the spell of chronology, statistics, or sentiment and rarely exhibit any consciousness of the logic of growth or change in terms of the motivations of people. And since Brooklyn has had so rapid and convulsive an evolution, being built up by a series of displacements rather than accretions, it requires precisely such an approach to make any sense out of it at all.

THE fiction consists of short stories and parts of novels by some very talented and well-known authors, most of whose contributions to this volume happen to be of little merit because, in them, they have either sacrificed their sense of humanity to a single stylistic effect, have become infatuated with some personal sentiment that soaks up the story, or tried to develop some philosophic platitude. The only two fiction writers represented who do not turn their

characters into mannequins, machine-tool their style, or cut their scenery out of wax are Edmund Wilson and Theodore Dreiser. Dreiser's description of the ex-financier Hurstwood, working as a scab in the Brooklyn transit strike of 1895, is so authentically evocative of people, places, and events as to make the selections from Miller, Fuchs, Wolfe, and Irwin Shaw read, by contrast, like jazzy fairy tales.

Wilson is represented by a fragment from *Memoirs of Hecate County* and, also, an article written for the *New Republic* in 1931 about three people who attempted to commit suicide in Brooklyn on the same day. Particularly in this setting there is something very impressive about Wilson's freedom from hackneyed responses and the effort he makes to perceive and judge in valid, personal terms. His discriminating and genuinely cultured appreciation of the people, temper, and even the houses of such sections as Flatbush, Bay Ridge, and Brownsville (referred to by the editors as "a bitter slums" and described by Wilson in 1931, much more accurately, as "a paradise of brick—all fairly low buildings and mostly very clean and neat, not an unattractive place to live") cuts through layers of petrified attitudes and

The Zionist Idea. By Joseph Heller

A comprehensive handbook of Zionism which discusses the national, religious, social and ethical ideologies which shaped the Zionist movement. The book, whose author is a noted Jewish historian and essayist, is intended for both the Zionist and non-Zionist. \$3.00

Days of Awe. By S. Y. Agnon

A treasury of traditions, legends, and learned commentaries concerning Rosh ha-Shanah, Yom Kippur, and the Days Between. Life and literature, living practice, and philosophical contemplation are here woven together by Agnon's masterly hand. \$3.50

The World of Emma Lazarus. By H. E. Jacob

A warm biography of the gifted American poetess who, stirred by the pogroms in Russia, became a spokesman for the plight of the Jewish masses. It is her verses that are inscribed on the Statue of Liberty. Illustrated. A Jewish Book Guild selection for June 1949. \$3.00

Schocken Books Inc.

342 Madison Avenue, New York 17, N. Y.

makes you realize just how obnoxious, snobbish, and deadening are most of the local color and human interest stories that appear in the *New Yorker*, other popular magazines, and the weekly supplements of newspapers.

A few specimens of this genre are included in the volume, among them a particularly irksome one by Meyer Berger about the ex-wife of two defunct, homicidal, Brooklyn dockyard leaders. Mr. Berger manages to squeeze every sentence he utters till it oozes charm, ebullience, and naivety but you can't help suspecting that underneath all the eccentric behavior and easy acceptance of violence, the woman was much more sophisticated and knowing about society than Mr. Berger would have his readers realize—possibly even more than Mr. Berger realizes. Any recognition that the eccentrics depicted in the falsely modest, self-effacing style, so prevalent in many forms of American writing today and so conspicuous in this volume, are at all aware of the relation between their antics and social norms, is generally enough to ruin the drollery. It is the conspiracy to share a monopoly of consciousness between the reader and the writer while robbing the subject of every vestige of it, that makes these stories so degrading in human terms and so unfunny if you refuse to play the game.

Pilgrim's Progress

PILGRIMS IN A NEW LAND. By LEE M. FRIEDMAN. The Jewish Publication Society of America. 471 pp. \$4.00.

Reviewed by MARVIN MEYERS

HEROES have their authorized biographies, regiments their official histories, villages their antiquarian collections—and shall the American Jews not have a book? Lee M. Friedman, President of the American Jewish Historical Society, has already contributed a small shelf of studies; and his latest volume of essays leaves no doubt that we shall have a book. It will be written by Mr. Friedman and his colleagues, the parochial historians. It will extend to many volumes. And it will read very much like *Pilgrims in a New Land*.

An imposing prospect, three centuries of American Jewish biography captured, mounted, and proudly labeled. From crevices and dark corners will emerge the figures long ignored by academic historians, men who have been—if

nothing else—Jews, Americans, and in some sense respectable. Moses Franks, for instance, will have a chapter of his own in Revolutionary history for his part in bearing three boxes of money to George Washington, although: "Alas and alack! . . . All we actually know is that, two weeks after their commission, they safely delivered the money into the hands of General Washington at his Cambridge headquarters."

The fidgeting, non-sectarian academicians are wrong in viewing this new enterprise in historiography as a mere attic-accumulation of anecdotes. "The objective," Mr. Friedman amply demonstrates, "is to seek out the dualism of the Jew and to expound the undying vital essence of the Jewish 'blue waters fresh' and their gifts of 'lavish growths' in the seas of American life. . . ." Mr. Friedman, of course, sees these spiritual gifts brought to a new land by Jewish pilgrims as having little to do with Orthodox Judaism or Jewish-European folkways. These are gifts domesticated upon American soil, in Hollywood, in the garment industry, in the diplomatic service, in the labor movement. Samuel Goldwyn's pioneering labors in the creation of a "spontaneous folk-art" embody no less of the (adjusted) Jewish spirit than Louis Borgenicht's innovations in the production of children's dresses (with "tricks, tucks, pleats, shirring, Eton effects"). If Samuel Gompers knew absolutely nothing about Jewish values and traditions, as Benjamin Stolberg testifies in a letter to Mr. Friedman, and if he consciously rejected the Jewish faith, then it is no less certain that his subconscious bore the stamp of the prophetic quest for justice. (Where did a Terence V. Powderly find his sources?)

Where will this catalogue of Jewish-American virtue end? Violinists and baseball players will find a place. Burlesque impresarios—doubtful. Certainly not Communists or bootleggers.

NATURALLY Mr. Friedman concentrates upon men of affairs. Enough hard, practical achievements are listed in one modest volume to justify the ways of the Jew to Gentiles. That is not to say cultural pioneers are neglected. Goldwyn has been mentioned. Add, too, the versatile 19th-century journalist Mordecai Manuel Noah, whose occasional dramatic works are widely acknowledged to be no worse than others of the period. Perhaps the cultural episode which best points the author's moral is revealed in an essay on the Touro Synagogue of Newport. Here Jewish money and an English architect created

"one of America's outstanding examples of colonial architecture." It has not a trace of the religion of the occupants, in the opinion of an expert cited by Mr. Friedman. Within its doors the Jewish merchants of Newport, in every way typical of their place, trade, and time, held Orthodox religious services. "Thus this structure symbolizes the role of the Jew in America, integrated as part of the nation and yet not wholly submerged."

So busy are Mr. Friedman's biographical subjects in adding their mite to American progress that one rarely hears a personal voice with a Jewish inflection. Aaron Lopez pursues his lawsuit, Moses Levy instructs his jury to convict, Oscar Straus pacifies the Turks, Moses Franks hastens with his message—and none has a word to say on what it means to be a Jew in America. Is it possible that the synthesis of "basic Jewishness" and Americanism, which nearly everyone manages in these pages, leaves such themes to imaginative literature?

There is no dismissing, by complaints such as these, the solid and enterprising scholarship of the parochial historians, exemplified by Mr. Friedman's current volume. The parochial historian need not accept all of the obligations of the academic, and a sense of pride in his people may properly shape his prose and judgments. I want to suggest only a few prudential considerations. Insistence upon the typically Jewish quality of every sort of activity undertaken by American Jews invites an ugly rejoinder. If we are to claim full credit for the Jewish traveling salesman, with his "fresh energies, business imagination, and indomitable zeal," can we refuse identification with the cheat? If we are to impress the unwilling Jews, like Gompers and Ernestine Rose, into service, can we condemn the anti-Semite's sleuthing for a drop of Jewish blood? And this dragging of the graveyards for patriotic bones—may not one suspect that we protest too much?

Middle East Echoes

ARABS, OIL, AND HISTORY. By KERMIT ROOSEVELT. Harper. 371 pp. \$3.50.

IN SEARCH OF A FUTURE. By MAURICE HINDUS. Doubleday. 270 pp. \$3.00.

Reviewed by JOEL CARMICHAEL

BOTH these books are calculated to provide a light, handy, and comprehensive guidebook

to the Middle East for an American public almost wholly ignorant of anything but its geographic location. They combine the disengaged tone of prewar travel books with the content of the streamlined journealese produced about exotic places in such volume during and since the last war.

At this point their resemblance ends. Mr. Roosevelt's book is a relatively detailed account by someone personally involved in Middle Eastern affairs as a functionary of the American government for some years during the war. It has a great deal of political discussion, many interviews with well-known political personages, and a sort of political angle. Mr. Hindus's book is assembled by someone avowedly ignorant of the subject-matter and looking at everything with the naive eyes of the newcomer. It requires, however, great talent and sincerity to make naivety interesting to others, and also literary style, all of which Mr. Hindus lacks; the result is a hotch-potch of anecdotal-ized observations, talks with taxi-drivers, observations on insect life in Persian villages, and some unexceptionable data on material conditions, principally from the point of view of the possibilities of agricultural progress.

Yearbook on Human Rights for 1947

Constitutional, legislative, and international texts relating to human rights enacted during 1947, and an account of the activities of the United Nations in this field since the signing of the Charter in 1945. \$6.00

Reflections on Our Age

Twenty-two internationally known intellectuals speak to the opening session of Unesco in Paris on education, science, and culture. "Deserves the widest circulation."—*San Francisco Chronicle*. \$4.50

Columbia University Press, N. Y. 27

MR. ROOSEVELT's book has a certain political weight, if only because his views are representative of a substantial, indeed, often decisive, opinion in American government circles, and because of his moderation and general fair-mindedness.

His book covers a good deal of ground, taking in Egypt, Iraq, Transjordan (now the Hashemite Jordan Kingdom), Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, and Saudi-Arabia, as well as Persia, Turkey, and Afghanistan (the last three very briefly), and the interplay of the Great Powers in the Middle East; it includes some rather extensive generalizing about the character of the area and its people, world history, and so on. It has some major defects, which doubtless arise from the fact that its unity as a book is not one of content but rather of point of view, the point of view of an educated American explaining matters from within the range of interest of someone who has just said: "Tell me something about the Middle East." It would be fair to call it superficial, not pedantically, but simply because it explains difficult matters without seriously taking into account, or endeavoring to cope with, the realities and contradictions involved in the Middle East situation.

For instance, while it certainly would be possible to give a simple explanation of Arab society, it is precisely for simplification that historical perspective of some kind is indispensable. Mr. Roosevelt's desire to give a simultaneous and general account of such things as the relationship between the Arab states and the Arabs, between Islam and Arab nationalism, between the Desert and the Sown, and so on, will inevitably lead to great confusion in the mind of the ordinary reader exactly at the point where he thought everything was being made clear for him by Mr. Roosevelt's readable and hail-fellow-well-met approach. Perhaps this is chiefly because Mr. Roosevelt, like most of us, has been brought up to regard the modern state as somehow a fixed and central institution of social life. But this assumption is far from helpful in dealing with a society like that of the Arabs, in which up to not much more than a generation ago, the community was identical with religion, so that men were first Muslims, then Arabic-speakers, then nomads or peasants, and lastly people from, say, Basrah or Bagdad. Up to very recently, Iraq and Transjordan were genuinely meaningless as states, having roots neither in

history, nor tradition, nor language, nor religion, nor geography, indeed not having any existence at all except as administrative or dynastic contrivances. And since in any case these flimsy latter-day structures have long since been submerged by the evolution of Arab nationalism as a whole, which has engulfed even Egypt—the only Arab state with any distinct modern history—what is, above all, needed now for the foreign observer is a sense of proportion if he is to make this process meaningful.

PALESTINE of course constitutes the most controversial element of the book, and with respect to this a vein of extremely well-bred, rather restrained but classical anti-Zionism runs throughout it. Classical, that is, in being based on the "pro-Arab" stereotype of the Arabs' having a greater "right" to Palestine by virtue of lengthier habitation etc. than the Jews, to whom of course Mr. Roosevelt's urbanity and essential humanitarianism accords certain rights too. Mr. Roosevelt on Zionism sounds like a voice from the past, now that Israel is an accomplished fact. This echo from the endless polemics of three decades on the pros and cons of such things as immigration and land-purchase, simply reveals, now that the prime political act of establishing a state has created new forms of political expression, the profound insubstantiality of all these polemics, being, as they were, neither history nor objective analysis, but merely a species of bureaucratic memoranda.

As FOR Mr. Hindus, it is difficult to see precisely why he went to the Middle East in the first place or why his publishers sent him. In this melange of elementary facts, abundant quotations from the Bible, and facile references to ancient history, little real insight or knowledge can be discerned: the banal and profoundly incorrect declaration that the glories of the great Arab Empire of the Middle Ages were to be ascribed to men who were racially Arab is symptomatic. Mr. Hindus confines himself to Persia, Iraq, Egypt, and Palestine, and the point of his book, if it has one, is the undeniably truth that the fearfully rapacious, lopsided, and backward social regime in the first three countries make a land-reform of some kind imperative. He comes out enthusiastically for the remarkable achievements of the Zionists in Palestine, in the application of modern tech-

nology to agriculture and animal husbandry, as constituting an example for the rest of the Middle East. This is the only indication of Mr. Hindus's old-time reformist grow. Alas!

Since engineering is simple and politics difficult, more enlightenment as to the means of attaining this desirable goal would be required than he hints at.

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

MARTIN GREENBERG has contributed articles and reviews to *COMMENTARY*, *Partisan Review*, and other periodicals.

ROBERT GORHAM DAVIS teaches English and American literature at Smith College. He has written for a number of literary journals.

KURT LIST edits the music magazine *Listen* and has contributed articles on Jewish music to *COMMENTARY*.

EMIL L. FACKENHEIM teaches philosophy at the University of Toronto.

WILLIAM POSTER has contributed poetry to *Poetry* magazine.

MARVIN MEYERS is an instructor in social sciences at the University of Chicago.

JOEL CARMICHAEL has written for the *Nation*, *COMMENTARY*, and other magazines.

COMMENTARY

is printed by

THE COMET PRESS, INC.

200 Varick Street, New York 14, N. Y.

WATkins 4-6700



65

PRINTERS OF FINE BOOKLETS, BOOKS, AND PUBLICATIONS

FINE FUNERAL SERVICE For over 50 Years

RIVERSIDE
Funeral Directors

*Memorial
Chapel, Inc.*

Charles Rosenthal
Edward Rosenthal
Morton Rosenthal

Carl Grossberg
Maxwell W. Passerman
Leo J. Filer

NEW YORK • BROOKLYN • LONG ISLAND
BRONX • WESTCHESTER • MIAMI • MIAMI BEACH

ADOLPH LEWISOHN & SONS, INC.

61 Broadway

New York 6, N. Y.

METALS

INVESTMENT ADVISORY SERVICE

Descriptive Brochure available on request

RALPH E. SAMUEL & CO.

115 BROADWAY

NEW YORK 6, N. Y.

COrtlandt 7-3987

Members

NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE
COMMODITY EXCHANGE, INC.
NEW YORK CURB EXCHANGE (ASSOC.)